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moments in a vibrant,
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“Art of Football get it.
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classy and stylish way" Ball Street

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the vibrancy of the game
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Hitesh Ratna, Editor, FourFourTwo

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Luka Modric

WORLD PLAYER OF THE YEAR

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- WORLD MANAGER OF THE YEAR
- WORLD TEAM OF THE YEAR
- PEOPLE OF THE YEAR

6 *new Champions League stars*

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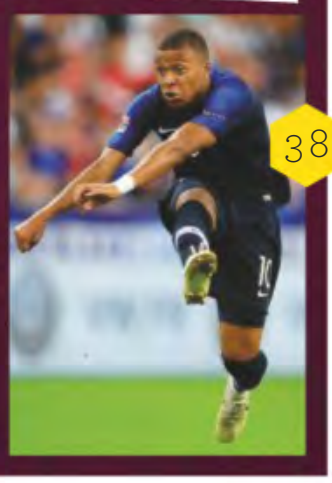

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Real Madrid
HUAWEI

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TURKEY...Galatasaray fans liven things up during a training session ahead of a game against Istanbul rivals Besiktas

GERMANY...Fabian Bredlow of Nuremberg saves from Kai Havertz of Bayer Leverkusen

USA...Atlanta United celebrate the club's first MLS Cup success

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FROM THE EDITOR

Congratulations to Luka Modric, *World Soccer*'s World Player of the Year for 2018. And not forgetting Didier Deschamps and France, 2018 World Manager and World Team of the Year.

The various international player awards have chopped, changed and re-launched in recent times, but our awards are the oldest and longest-running of their kind.

The criticism of individual awards has been that they detract from the collective nature of football as a team game. But Modric was the brilliant orchestrator of Croatia at the World Cup in Russia – an outstanding individual in a team whose performances exceeded all expectations.

> The criticism of individual awards has been that they detract from the collective nature of football as a team game

It was perhaps a surprise that Lionel Messi, a four-times winner, finished no higher than fourth this year despite some outstanding performances for Barcelona this autumn.

But in a World Cup year, performances at the summer tournament have to be the most important factor in any decision. And while Modric was a worthy winner of the World Player award, Didier Deschamps and France were clear and deserving winners of the Manager and Team awards.

See you in 2019!

Gavin Hamilton, Editor

10 SIGNIFICANT EVENTS THIS MONTH

1 Luka Modric is World Player of the Year p34
2 River beat Boca in the Libertadores Final p24
3 Palmeiras win Brazilian championship p60
4 Atlanta United claim their first MLS Cup p62
5 Shanghai SIPG lift the Chinese league title p70
6 Kawasaki retain their J.League crown p72
7 Republic of Ireland line up Kenny p21
8 Asian Cup kicks off in UAE p56
9 Women's World Cup draw takes place in Paris p52
10 Raheem Sterling sparks racism debate p23

ITALY

Milan risk Europe ban over FFP

Former European champions Milan will be banned from European competition for a season if they do not break even by June 2021 after falling foul of UEFA's Financial Fairplay (FFP) rules.

The decision from Europe's governing body was taken after Milan successfully appealed against a two-year ban imposed last summer. The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) partially upheld that appeal and asked for a "proportionate disciplinary measure" to be imposed on Milan.

The Italian club now has two-and-a-half years to balance its books or face missing European competition in either 2022-23 or 2023-24, should the team qualify.

UEFA confirmed that Milan can appeal again to CAS against the new ruling.

The UEFA decision was another setback for the seven-time champions of Europe, who crashed out of this season's Europa League after losing 3-1 to Olympiakos.

"I want to apologise to all Milan fans. That was embarrassing. Taking [Patrick]Cutrone off? I messed up. I take all responsibility"

Coach Gennaro Gattuso takes the blame for his side's Europa League exit to Olympiakos

Honour...Abdelkarim Hassan with AFC president Shaikh Salman

QATAR

Hassan claims AFC award

Al Sadd's influential defender Abdelkarim Hassan was named AFC Asian Player of the Year, beating Kashima Antlers' Yuma Suzuki and Kento Misao to the top award, which is restricted to players based in Asia.

The 25-year-old became the second Qatari to be named AFC Asian Player of the Year, after Khalfan Ibrahim in 2006.

Left-back Hassan played a key role in his club's progress to the 2018 AFC Champions League semi-finals and the runners-up spot in the 2017-18 Qatari league.

He is expected to play a key role for Qatar in the Asian Cup, which kicks off in UAE in January.

Going out...Milan's Patrick Cutrone takes on Olympiakos

HEROES & VILLAINS

PABLO ESCOBAR

A week before he retired, the 40-year-old scored four goals as The Strongest beat Sport Boys 6-0 to become the first player to score 200 goals for one club in the Bolivian top flight. He narrowly missed out with his previous side, Bolivar, where he scored 198.

Milestone... Pablo Escobar

WATFORD FANS

During their Premier League game at Leicester City, the away fans unfurled a banner in memory of the hosts' late owner Vichai Srivaddhanaprabha – and were rewarded with free food and drink by his son, Aiyawatt.

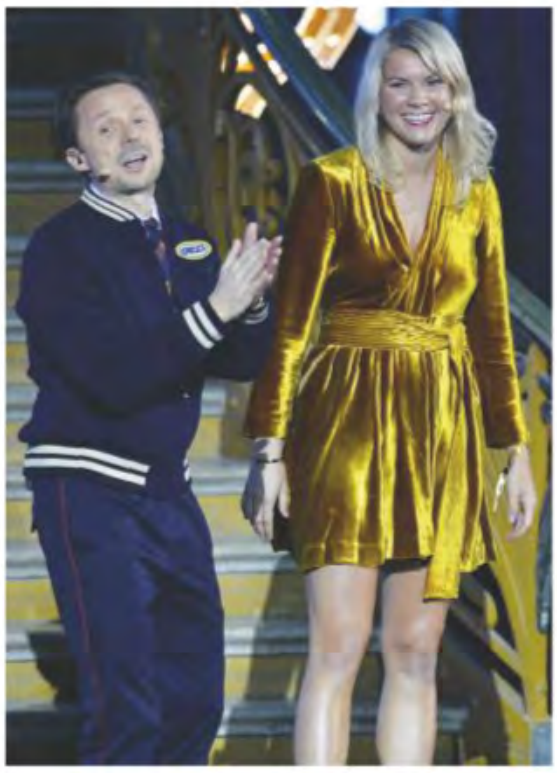
Record winner...Cristiano Ronaldo

CRISTIANO RONALDO

Became the first player to win 100 UEFA Champions League games – which is more than 136 of the 140 clubs who have appeared in the competition, with Manchester United (117), Bayern Munich (132), Barcelona (141) and Real Madrid (155) the exceptions.

SEBASTIAN ABREU

The 42-year-old Uruguayan striker extended his world record after signing for Brazilian fourth-tier side Rio Branco – his 28th club.



Foolish...Martin Solveig (left) with Ada Hegerberg

MARTIN SOLVEIG

Presenting Ada Hegerberg with her award as the first female winner of the Ballon d'Or, the French DJ spoilt the moment with a crass comment, asking Lyon's Norwegian striker if she could "twerk".

PATRICE-EDOUARD NGAISSONA

The ex-Central African Republic federation president, who is a CAF committee member, was arrested on suspicion of committing war crimes.

JURGEN KLOPP

The Liverpool manager apologised in the press conference following the Merseyside derby, after he ran halfway across the Anfield pitch to celebrate Divock Origi's last-minute winner against Everton.

Emotional dash... Jurgen Klopp

"Maybe my foot is not made for football"

Bayern Munich's Kingsley Coman reflects on a career ravaged by injury

Dodi LUKEBAKIO

(Fortuna Dusseldorf)

Having scored a hat-trick as Fortuna Dusseldorf drew 3-3 at Bayern Munich, the Belgium under-21 is proof positive of the benefits of the loan system.

After joining Watford from Anderlecht in January 2018, the Belgo-Congolese 21-year-old found the going tough at Vicarage Road. But how well he has bounced back since joining Fortuna this season.

Within a few months of moving to Germany he became the first Bundesliga marksman to score three against Bayern since Ebbe Sand of Schalke in 2001 and the first player ever to put three past Manuel Neuer in a league game.

So what has made the difference? Well, in marked contrast to his experience in England, his Dusseldorf coach Friedhelm Funkel believes in him. Unlike in the Premier League, top-flight bosses in Germany will back a hunch and give youngsters their head.

"Dodi's a young man with a lot of self-confidence and has settled in very well," says Funkel. "He's extraordinarily quick, has great dribbling ability and is ice-cool in his finishing.

"He's an unpredictable sort of player. That's why we like to give him as much freedom as possible. He has the potential to develop into a very good footballer, but we must not get carried away."

Hat-trick...beating Bayern keeper Manuel Neuer

Jordan TORUNARIGHA (Hertha Berlin)
The Germany under-21 international centre-back has been mightily impressive this autumn, scoring in his side's win away at Hanover.

Eder MILITAO (Porto)
The Brazilian stopper was on target in the Champions League win at Schalke and is getting better with every week.

TAISON (Shakhtar Donetsk)
The Ukrainian side's skipper and dribbling machine made two and scored another in his side's 3-1 Champions League victory at Hoffenheim.

Juan BERNAT (Paris Saint-Germain)
The left-back, unjustly labelled a "bad buy" by Bayern Munich president Uli Hoeness, scored his side's opener in the 2-1 Champions League win at home to Liverpool.

Marcos LLORENTE (Real Madrid)
The 23-year-old is proving himself an outstanding alternative to Casemiro as Madrid's midfield anchor.

Houssem AOUAR (Lyon)
The midfielder was quite brilliant in the 2-2 Champions League draw with Manchester City – whose boss Pep Guardiola is a self-confessed fan.

ESM XI

EUROPEAN SPORTS MEDIA

NOVEMBER 2018

HOW IT WORKS Every month, journalists from each member of the European Sports Media group select their first XI based on the best individual performances from Europe's top competitions. For details of how each ESM member voted, visit worldsoccer.com/esm11

SEASON RANKINGS
Cumulative votes through the season

GOALKEEPERS

Jan OBLAK (Atletico Madrid)	8
EDERSON (Manchester City)	7
Wojciech SZCZESNY (Juventus)	5
Marc-Andre TER STEGEN (Barcelona)	4
Thibaut COURTOIS (Real Madrid)	3
ALISSON (Liverpool)	1
Roman BURKI (Borussia Dortmund)	1
Petr CECH (Arsenal)	1
David DE GEA (Manchester United)	1
Ralf FAHRMANN (Schalke)	1
Hugo LLORIS (Tottenham Hotspur)	1
Mike MAIGNAN (Lille)	1
Jordi MASIP (Real Valladolid)	1
NETO (Valencia)	1
Oier OLAZABAL (Levante)	1
Rui PATRICIO (Wolverhampton Wanderers)	1
Jordan PICKFORD (Everton)	1

DEFENDERS

Virgil VAN DIJK (Liverpool)	20
Leonardo BONUCCI (Juventus)	13
Joao CANCELO (Juventus)	9
Giorgio CHIELLINI (Juventus)	9
Jordi ALBA (Barcelona)	8
MARQUINHOS (Paris Saint-Germain)	8
ALEX SANDRO (Juventus)	7
Thomas MEUNIER (Paris Saint-Germain)	7
Ashraf HAKIMI (Borussia Dortmund)	6
Aymeric LAPORTE (Manchester City)	5
Lukasz PISZCZEK (Borussia Dortmund)	5
Marcos ALONSO (Chelsea)	4
Manuel AKANJI (Borussia Dortmund)	3
Trent ALEXANDER-ARNOLD (Liverpool)	3
Juan BERNAT (Paris Saint-Germain)	3
Sergio RAMOS (Real Madrid)	3
Milan SKRINIAR (Internazionale)	3
DAVID LUIZ (Chelsea)	2
Matthijs DE LIGT (Ajax)	2
Joe GOMEZ (Liverpool)	2
Lucas HERNANDEZ (Atletico Madrid)	2
Vincent KOMPANY (Manchester City)	2
MARCELO (Real Madrid)	2
Gerard PIQUE (Barcelona)	2
Andrew ROBERTSON (Liverpool)	2
Kyle WALKER (Manchester City)	2
David ALABA (Bayern Munich)	1
Dani CARVAJAL (Real Madrid)	1
Abdou DIALO (Borussia Dortmund)	1
Junior FIRPO (Real Betis)	1
Makoto HASEBE (Eintracht Frankfurt)	1
Mats HUMMELS (Bayern Munich)	1
Thilo KEHRER (Paris Saint-Germain)	1
Kalidou KOULIBALY (Napoli)	1
Benjamin MENDY (Manchester City)	1
Nicolas OTAMENDI (Manchester City)	1
Sokratis PAPASTATHOPOULOS (Arsenal)	1
Benjamin PAVARD (Stuttgart)	1
Sergi ROBERTO (Barcelona)	1
Nico SCHULZ (Hoffenheim)	1
Thiago SILVA (Paris Saint-Germain)	1
Nicolas TAGLIAFICO (Ajax)	1
Omer TOPRAK (Borussia Dortmund)	1

MIDFIELDERS

Eden HAZARD (Chelsea)	16
Marco REUS (Borussia Dortmund)	15
David SILVA (Manchester City)	12
Axel WITSEL (Borussia Dortmund)	7
Philippe COUTINHO (Barcelona)	5
Leroy SANE (Manchester City)	5
FERNANDINHO (Manchester City)	4
JORGINHO (Chelsea)	4
N'Golo KANTE (Chelsea)	4
Miralem PJANIC (Juventus)	4
Jadon SANCHO (Borussia Dortmund)	4
Thorgan HAZARD (Borussia M'gladbach)	3
Bernardo SILVA (Manchester City)	3
ARTHUR (Barcelona)	2
Thomas DELANEY (Borussia Dortmund)	2
ISCO (Real Madrid)	2
Blaise MATUIDI (Juventus)	2
James MILNER (Liverpool)	2
Nicolas PEPE (Lille)	2
Ever BANEGA (Sevilla)	1
Ross BARKLEY (Chelsea)	1
Rodrigo BETANCUR (Juventus)	1
Kevin DE BRUYNE (Manchester City)	1
Memphis DEPAY (Lyon)	1
Angel DI MARIA (Paris Saint-Germain)	1
Javairo DILROSUN (Hertha Berlin)	1
Julian DRAXLER (Paris Saint-Germain)	1
Ondrej DUDA (Hertha Berlin)	1
Christian ERIKSEN (Tottenham Hotspur)	1
Andre GOMES (Everton)	1
Ilkay GUNDOGAN (Mancheser City)	1
Franck KESSIE (Milan)	1
Sami KHEDIRA (Juventus)	1
Giovani LO CELSO (Real Betis)	1
Riyad MAHREZ (Manchester City)	1
Luka MODRIC (Real Madrid)	1
Jesus NAVAS (Sevilla)	1
Matteo POLITANO (Internazionale)	1
Ivan RAKITIC (Barcelona)	1
Pablo SARABIA (Sevilla)	1
SAUL Niguez (Atletico Madrid)	1
SON Heung-min (Tottenham Hotspur)	1
Lucas TORREIRA (Arsenal)	1
Oliver TORRES (Porto)	1
Cengiz UNDER (Roma)	1
Marco VERRATTI (Paris Saint-Germain)	1
Georginio WIJNALDUM (Liverpool)	1
WILLIAN (Chelsea)	1

FORWARDS

Lionel MESSI (Barcelona)	15
Paco ALCACER (Borussia Dortmund)	11
Kylian MBAPPE (Paris Saint-Germain)	9
Krzysztof PIATEK (Genoa)	9
Cristiano RONALDO (Juventus)	9
NEYMAR (Paris Saint-Germain)	8
Andre SILVA (Sevilla)	8
Luis SUAREZ (Barcelona)	7
Mauro ICARDI (Internazionale)	6
Pierre-Emerick AUBAMEYANG (Arsenal)	5
Raheem STERLING (Manchester City)	4
Sergio AGUERO (Manchester City)	3
Harry KANE (Tottenham Hotrspur)	3
Dries MERTENS (Napoli)	3
Lorenzo INSIGNE (Napoli)	2
Mohammed SALAH (Liverpool)	2
Hakim ZIYECH (Ajax)	2
Gareth BALE (Real Madrid)	1
Roberto FIRMINO (Liverpool)	1
Sebastien HALLER (Eintracht Frankfurt)	1
Borja IGLESIAS (Espanyol)	1
Luka JOVIC (Eintracht Frankfurt)	1
Robert LEWANDOWSKI (Bayern Munich)	1
Cristhian STUANI (Girona)	1

Keir RADNEDGE

THE INSIDER

We need to talk about winter 2022

In less than four years time the focus of the international game will settle on Qatar and the 32 hopefuls at the 2022 World Cup finals. Yet the debate among the cognoscenti still fails to focus on pragmatic issues.

For example, signals have yet to emerge from international federations and hundreds of leagues about how they propose to manage the switch to November and December – not in terms of the superstars, but the professional mainstream who keep competitive football turning over and are so beloved of the TV cameras.

Firstly, though, to deal with the staging issues...

When the Gulf state won the bid to host the World Cup the possibility remained open that, for diplomatic reasons, some matches might be shared with neighbouring states. But such talk is now barely audible. In the eight years since the infamous FIFA ExCo vote, the political balance in the Gulf has shifted dramatically.

Qatar remains a subject at issue over the conditions of immigrant construction workers, but critical fervour is fading and FIFA has sidestepped the issue by virtue of the addition of human rights to the list of demands for the future. For 2010 read the bad old days; for Blatter read Infantino. And so on.

Work in progress...FIFA president Gianni Infantino (left) inspects the Al Wakrah Stadium in Qatar

> It's impossible to believe that Sky, BT Sport and other broadcasters will be content with two football-free months in the middle of the traditional season schedule

More significantly, Qatar is now isolated diplomatically by a coalition led from neighbouring Saudi Arabia. But the Qataris' negative publicity is as nothing compared with the hostile perception attracted by the Saudis over the past year. The bombing of Yemen on the one hand and the Istanbul Embassy murder of Jamal Khashoggi have far outweighed Qatar's affairs in the balance of international opprobrium.

Hence Qatar is more than ever determined to maintain its sole command of the 2022 finals, and sharing is off the agenda at such comparatively short notice.

As for the numbers, FIFA president Gianni Infantino has kept many of those potential re-election voters firmly onside by hinting at a possible early upgrade to 48 teams, rather than in 2026. But Qatar is preparing stadia, transport and accommodation for 32 teams and their fans. Also, the contracts have long since been signed, sealed and the tenders awarded.

So far, so clear. But that is not all. Not by a long way.

The World Cup is such a massive event that comparatively little competitive football takes place simultaneously and there are no other international competitions competing for attention. The focus of fans, sponsors and television is all about the four-yearly extravaganza.

But what will happen around the world in November and December 2022? It's impossible to believe that, for example, the three English lower leagues will clear the decks and slumber away for two months.

It's impossible to believe that Sky, BT Sport and other broadcasters will be content with two football-free months in the middle of the traditional season schedule. No one is talking about it, but there are other sports which may see an opportunity to strike back.

Shut down...Leeds United (in white) and Bristol City in the Championship

Talk about tournament balance in the UK has been more about the unknown effects of Brexit. But football does know an issue is looming in November and December 2022, and the need to shuffle preceding seasons means such talk should start sooner rather than later. WS

Remember FIFAGate?

The fallout from FIFAGate is still being felt even though the fuss has died down.

It was little more than three years ago that seven senior executives were escorted out of the Baur au Lac Hotel in Zurich and since then almost all the FBI's targets have pleaded guilty to corruption offences – conspiracy, bribery, wire fraud – and then bargained what they know about their own and co-defendants' nefarious activities to get reduced sentences.

The latest to obtain a get-out-of-jail-comparatively-free card was former FIFA ExCo member Rafael Salguero.

The former president of the Guatemala federation was given a "time served" sentence in New York for "helping police with their inquiries" since 2016. He admitted multiple charges including negotiating thousands of dollars in bribes from "an Italy-based individual" for his vote in the 2018/2022 bid battle.

The Salguero connection had been kept secret until just before sentencing. The assumption was that he had provided valuable information about his then-CONCACAF president Jack Warner. The latter, along with Ricardo Teixeira and Nicolas Leoz, is one of the three highest-profile targets beyond the irritated reach of the US.

Teixeira, former president of the Brazilian CBF, is protected by an anti-extradition clause in his national constitution, while ex-CONMEBOL boss Leoz will not be extradited from Paraguay because he is 90 and in ill-health.

Warner has an expensive London legal team contesting an extradition application lodged in Trinidad & Tobago. The lengthy legal duel is thought to be one reason why the eagerly awaited sentencing of Jeff Webb, his banker and CONCACAF successor, has been repeatedly delayed.

Once Webb is sentenced, with his crimes laid bare, it is thought Warner will seek to have extradition definitively rejected on the grounds that he could not expect a fair trial in the US.

Deal...Rafael Salguero (left) with Sepp Blatter

Looking up for Sheikh Salman

AFC president Sheikh Salman's re-election prospects have brightened since he crushed a bid to prevent him changing statutes to assist his nomination.

As a result, Saudi Arabia's Adel Ezzat has withdrawn his challenge and been replaced by an ally in UAE's Mohamed Khalfan Matar Saeed Al Romaithi. That in turn prompted a counter challenge from Qatar's Saoud Aziz Al Mohannadi.

The most likely outcome is that these two will split the Arab vote and ease Sheikh Salman back into the AFC leadership and FIFA vice-presidency.

This is handy for Sheikh Salman since influential supporter Sheikh Ahmad bin Fahad al Sabah from Kuwait is occupied in fending off an ethics investigation by the International Olympic Committee.

WINNERS

ATLANTA UNITED
Major League Soccer champions for the first time in just their second season.

RIVER PLATE
Libertadores Cup winners for a fourth time when they beat arch-rivals Boca Juniors in the re-arranged second leg of the Final in Madrid.

BRENDAN RODGERS
Won a seventh successive domestic trophy with Celtic when they beat Aberdeen to lift the Scottish League Cup.

LOSERS

INTERNAZIONALE
Needing to win at home to PSV to progress, they could only draw 1-1 and were knocked out of the Champions League by Tottenham Hotspur, who achieved the same score in Barcelona with an 85th-minute equaliser.

MONACO
Champions League semi-finalists two seasons ago, they have since failed to win a single group game.

CAMEROON
Due to stage the 2019 African Nations Cup, they were stripped of the hosting rights over "a number of compliance conditions".

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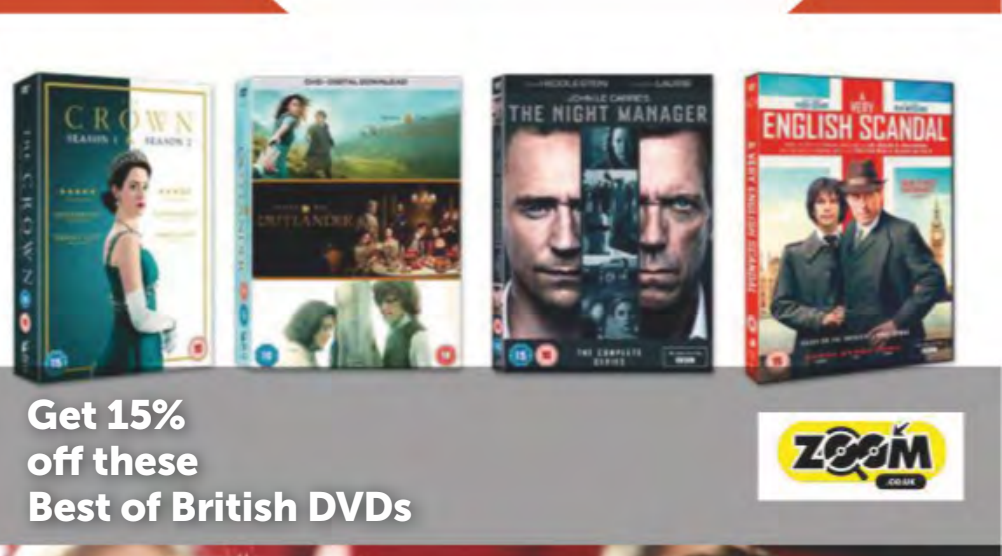

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Paul GARDNER

THE WORLDWIDE VIEW

Dyche's 'good honest tackling' is a sham

"It's embarrassing. I see them all diving..." Here we go again. A wildly exaggerated protest from Burnley manager Sean Dyche, sounding exactly like Tony Pulis a few years back – another English manager who was consumed with the notion that widespread diving was undermining the sport.

One of the problems with the Dyche/Pulis view is that there are absolutely no statistics to back up their vision of rampant diving. How frequently does it happen? Say, 10 times in every Premier League game? Oh, come on. Five times, then? Twice? Not that I've noticed...

Even once per game is doubtful as so many of the diving accusations are themselves doubtful. If you're looking for diving – and people like Dyche and Pulis are clearly relentless lookers – you will find it by inventing it.

Without an objective assessment of the number of diving incidents, Dyche's "they're all diving" claim can be dismissed for what it obviously is: an obsession-fuelled exaggeration.

And Dyche makes matters much worse by investing diving with the stain of being "morally wrong". He makes sure that we understand the pure evil of diving by creating a shining image of its opposite – what he calls "good, honest tackling".

But it was exactly this admirable tackling that drew serious criticism from Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp, who recently complained to the referee that his players needed more protection from Burnley's sliding tackles, insisting that "the injury threat was massive".

Dyche retorted with an impassioned: "I thought some of the timing of the challenges was superb." Nevertheless, there was a major problem for Dyche as Liverpool's Joe Gomez, slide-tackled by Ben Mee, was stretchered off with a broken leg.

Mee insisted that his tackle was flawless, Dyche backed him up, and even Klopp agreed that the tackle was "clean". Yet a broken leg had resulted. That was "unfortunate," said Mee.

Dyche widened his defence of Mee and hard tackling into a bitter attack on diving, referees and authorities such as FIFA and UEFA, alleging that "no one wants to deal with it".

Dyche's rant is interesting because it exposes just about everything that is misguided in the traditional English "hard but fair" attitude. Specifically, he is committed to excusing the excesses of defenders, to ensuring that they be allowed to play a robust, physical game and any injury to an opponent should be accepted as part of the sport.

It is surely obvious that the slide tackle always carries a threat of injury, given that it is invariably a studs-up tackle. If it is committed at speed, or with force, the injury potential is high.

All of Dyche's anger is directed at players who dive – "I can't believe it, the beautiful game, cheating everywhere" – and says there should be a three-game suspension if post-game video review finds them guilty.

One would imagine, from Dyche's analysis, that defenders are innocent of all wrongdoing and there are no clumsy, sly or late, tackles where the man, rather than the ball, is played. Yet such tackles are seen in every game, and plenty of them go unpunished.

If, as Dyche alleges, players are diving because they are not being punished, it surely is equally true that late and violent tackling is happening because players believe they can get away with it.

It's worth emphasising that dangerous or rash tackling can result in serious injuries. I've never heard of a dive resulting in injury to an opponent.

Dyche's praise of "good honest tackling" is a sham and the moral implications of "honest" have no place here. All that is needed is that players obey the rules of the sport and that referees enforce them. WS

> The slide tackle always carries a threat of injury, given that it is invariably a studs-up tackle

Crunch...Pedro Obiang of West Ham United feels the full force of a sliding tackle from Burnley defender Ben Mee

Brian GLANVILLE

THE VOICE OF FOOTBALL

Ozil, Arsenal's expensive luxury

Do Arsenal need Mesut Ozil? At a staggering £350,000 a week, he seems surplus to requirements at the moment. His manager, Unai Emery, has already said he does not want to use him in away matches. Lately he has not been deployed when fit in home matches.

He is an expensive luxury, indeed, who is known to have been incensed when substituted.

And now he has been exposed, most embarrassingly, as sprawling about having, like several other first-team players, inhaled so-called "hippy crack" from a balloon with instant physical results. Such indulgence is not in fact illegal, but it hardly caters to the needs of a professional footballer and can reportedly have long-term consequences.

Yet watching the Gunners make tedious work of ultimately beating a highly defensive Huddersfield Town at the Emirates, one wonders whether Ozil's unquestionable skills, his ability in the old Italian saying to "invent" the game, may not be essential to Arsenal.

Lucas Torreira's spectacular late scissors kick gave them a belated and uneasy victory over Huddersfield, though he was left expensively unmarked by a previously resolute defence. But the little Uruguayan, however energetic and incisive, is not essentially a playmaker.

You do wonder what possessed Arsenal to give Ozil a contract which could hardly be matched were it decided to sell him. Compare and contrast with the £25million it cost to get Torreira from Sampdoria.

Seeing Arsenal play Huddersfield, even though Town abandoned their traditional blue-and-white stripes for a quite unnecessary yellow, one thought of Herbert Chapman.

Triumphant... Herbert Chapman

Arguably one of the greatest of all club managers, he triumphed in turn with both Huddersfield and Arsenal. Before those two majestic spells, he managed a Leeds City club doomed to extinction, thrown out of the League for financial irregularities.

He himself was suspended from football and obliged to work in a factory but was then amnestied and took over at Huddersfield. A manager with an astonishing flair for inspiring and transforming his players, he won two consecutive championships with Town before leaving them for Arsenal, in 1925, whereupon he then took a third title.

But Chapman, though a Yorkshireman, had always wanted to work in London where before the Great War he had briefly been a player on the books of Tottenham Hotspur.

Unhappy...Mesut Ozil is substituted

Abused... Paul Canoville

Racism rears its ugly head – again

Abuse of black players has always been a horrifying phenomenon and alas it has just reared its ugly head again, with three Chelsea fans accused of racist abuse after the recent Manchester City game.

Raheem Sterling had every right to be outraged by the mindless abuse which he received and it made my mind go far back to Paul Canoville, the first black player ever to appear for Chelsea.

An outside-right of some promise, his life was made a misery by bigoted Chelsea fans, among them numerous neo-fascists and he did not stay long at the club.

When an old friend, Paul Elliott, who began at Charlton Athletic as a resourceful centre-half, left Pisa to play for Celtic he was assailed by torrents of abuse when playing at Celtic Park against Hearts – so much so that the Hearts captain nobly went over to his own supporters and begged them to stop.

Many years ago I wrote a short story, *Black Magic*, satirising the prejudice in a white coach. To my delight it was picked up after appearing in the old *Evening News* by the West Indian paper, *The Voice*.

It is amazing to consider that American baseball did not allow black players in its two senior leagues until after the second world war, and then only when a black war hero broke into a leading team did the doors at last open to black players, who have since excelled.

Reportedly, the finest pitcher in American baseball before the ban was lifted was one Satchel Paige. At least you could find black footballers at English clubs even before the first world war; prejudice not being given official status.

Note, however, that racism has lately been manifested by those jeering Everton supporters who assailed Watford's Isaac Success at Goodison Park, pointing and yelling at him.

It was not so long ago that Liverpool supporters were reported to have followed black fans home and threatened them if they came to Anfield again.

Ranieri faces formidable task

Can Claudio Ranieri, who once performed minor miracles at Leicester City, save Fulham?

They spent a hundred million during the summer after coming up from the Championship, but they were never going to find things easy in the Premier League. On the face of it, Fulham seem to have bought badly and a heavy recent defeat at Manchester United, who had been struggling to score goals, was ominous.

Arguably, their three best players were all aboard throughout last season. Tom Cairney, with his elegant left foot, can be a metronome for the side. Ryan Sessegnon is a precociously good left-winger who can also function as an overlapping full-back. Aleksandar Mitrovic, when decently supported, can be a dynamic striker.

As things stand, however, Ranieri has inherited a formidable task with a team which has been betrayed by its transfer policy.

Challenge... Claudio Ranieri

Impressive..David Luiz (centre) after scoring against Manchester City

It seems that City are mortal after all

What now for Manchester City? They seem in the vernacular to be "bang to rights" over illegitimate spending, with huge sums of money being generated by their middle eastern holding company.

They had been caught out before, escaping with a heavy fine, but now if the punishment is to fit the crime those very deep pockets should avail them nothing.

The only practical punishment would be to deprive them of league points.

Last season they sailed away with the title, but unconvincing displays against modest French opposition in Europe, plus their recent clear-cut defeat at Chelsea, suggest they may be, so to speak, mortal.

Their chief executioner at Stamford Bridge that day was that gifted but unpredictable centre-back David Luiz, who crowned his performance with a spectacular headed goal.

Of his great talents there has never been any doubt. Of his consistency all too many. A couple of World Cups ago, he was an extreme liability in a Brazilian defence horribly mauled by a rampant Germany in the semi-final. Nor did he look any better in the third-place match. But when on form he can be irresistible, as Manchester City discovered.

Meanwhile, City have done well to bind 18-year-old Phil Foden to an extended contract. Small but energetic, he is that rarity at City: a player who has come through the ranks. One hopes he will be given a sustained opportunity in the first team, when so much money has been spent on foreign players. England needs him but he in turn needs regular football.

● Read Brian Glanville's weekly online column at worldsoccer.com

"I've gone to football abroad and at home, for two, three, four, five-day stints...I should be an ambassador for British Airways with all the miles I have clocked up"

Sol Campbell on his efforts to get a first managerial job

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

Appointments, sackings and loans

IN

Korea move ...Jose Morais

Step up...Gaizka Garitano

EUROPE

MICK MCCARTHY was named Republic of Ireland manager for a second time. He will be succeeded after Euro 2020 by Stephen Kenny, who left Dundalk to take charge of the national under-21s.

RALPH HASENHUTTL, who left RB Leipzig in the summer, was appointed manager of Premier League strugglers Southampton after they sacked Mark Hughes.

Former England defender **SOL CAMPBELL**, who won 73 caps for his country, was appointed manager of fourth-tier Macclesfield Town.

Youth-team boss **GAIZKA GARITANO** replaced Eduardo Berizzo in charge of La Liga strugglers Athletic Bilbao. **LUIS GARCIA PLAZA** took over from Javier Calleja at Villarreal.

SOUTH AMERICA

FABIO MORENO replaced Marcelo Oliveira as coach of Fluminense after they were knocked out of the Sudamericana Cup in the semi-finals. **ANDRE JARDINE** took over as boss of Sao Paulo.

CONCACAF

Columbus Crew boss **GREGG BERHALTER** took over as coach of the USA national side.

A week after quitting MLS side Dallas, **OSCAR PAREJA** was named coach of Mexican club Tijuana.

AFRICA

ALAIN GIRESSE was named coach of Tunisia.

ASIA

JOSE MORAIS left Ukraine side Karpaty Lviv to coach K-League champions Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors, replacing **CHOI KANG-HEE** who left to join Chinese club Tianjin Quanjian.

Former Barcelona and Chelsea assistant **HENK TEN CATE** took charge of UAE side Al Wahda.

Genoa job... Cesare Prandelli

Prandelli returns to Serie A

CESARE PRANDELLI, who led Italy to Final of Euro 2012, replaced Ivan Juric as the coach of Genoa. Top scorer when the *Azzurri* won the World Cup in 1982, **PAOLO ROSSI** returned to Serie C side Vicenza as an ambassador and independent director.

OUT

EUROPE

After winning seven Bundesliga titles and the Champions League, **ARJEN ROBBEN** says that he will leave Bayern Munich at the end of the season.

After three months of his second spell with Olympiakos, midfielder **YAYA TOURE** left the Athens club.

Gone...Yaya Toure

CONCACAF

Former England international **ASHLEY COLE**, 37, was released by MLS side LA Galaxy.

Columbus Crew have agreed to sell **ZACK STEFFEN** to Manchester City in July for around £7million, which will be a club record and the most ever for an MLS goalkeeper.

AFRICA

Coach of 2015 CAF Champions League winners TP Mazembe of DR Congo, **PATRICE CARTERON** was sacked by Al Ahly after the Egyptian lost in the 2018 Final.

ASIA

GARY WHITE resigned as coach of Hong Kong after just three months in charge.

OBITUARIES

Yusif ABUBAKAR (1962-2018)
Coach of Aduana Stars when they won the Ghana Premier League in 2017, he died shortly after being named boss of the national under-23 side.

Josep LLUIS NUNEZ (1931-2018)
The most successful president in Barcelona's history, his reign from 1978 to 2000 saw the club win its first European Cup, in 1992, seven La Liga titles and six Spanish Cups. Was also responsible for bringing such stars as Diego Maradona, Johan Cruyff (as coach) and Ronaldo to the club.

Stephen Kenny

Republic of Ireland look to the future

Following the departure of Martin O'Neill and his assistant Roy Keane after a run of poor results that culminated in the Republic of Ireland's relegation to the third tier of the UEFA Nations League, the Football Association of Ireland (FAI) wasted no time in handing Mick McCarthy a second term in charge of the national side.

However, the association's decision to put Stephen Kenny in charge of the under-21 team surprised a lot of people as the FAI has never before appeared to be making any long-term plans for its managers.

Kenny will take charge of the under-21s for the upcoming 2021 European Championship qualifiers and in August 2020 the former Dundalk manager will move up and take over the senior team from McCarthy.

The 47-year-old Kenny – who has previously managed Longford Town, Bohemians, Derry City and Shamrock Rovers in the League of Ireland, and Dunfermline in Scotland – admits it was a tough decision to leave Dundalk, where he had six successful seasons.

"Yes, it was hard to leave, particularly with the Champions League seeding that we had for next season," says the Dubliner. "To make the decision to leave it had to be something special, but this job is really special for me."

Over the past six years Kenny has transformed the fortunes of Dundalk, who had just avoided relegation from the Premier Division the season before his arrival at Oriel Park. He led the Lilywhites to four championships and two FAI Cup wins, and under his watch they became the first League of Ireland club to qualify for the group stage of the Europa League.

Kenny gained a reputation as a meticulous manager during his time at Dundalk, recruiting promising players from smaller clubs. When Dundalk became successful and lost players to British clubs, he was able to slot in replacements who had no difficulty blending into the team's style of play.

Champion...with the Premier Division trophy this season

Feeling at home...the national under-21s manager in Dublin's Aviva Stadium

His success at Dundalk didn't go unnoticed and the FAI's Dutch-born high-performance director Ruud Dokter has admitted that he was very impressed with Kenny.

"I have followed Dundalk over the years and the way they play," says Dokter, who previously worked for the Dutch federation. "I have met Stephen many times, and we had discussions, and there was evidence about his philosophy and style of play.

"This is modern football. It's not Ireland, it's not me; it's about how you develop young players.

"And what we do is similar in Germany or France – to educate our young players in a modern way."

Kenny's first under-21 game in charge will be against Luxembourg on March 24 and he admits: "Between now and the end of March I will be checking on all the available players in the League of Ireland, England and Scotland.

"We have a very poor record at under-21 level up to now and it's going to be very difficult to qualify as only one country get through. I aim to put that right."

One player who could make the breakthrough is Tottenham Hotspur's 16-year-old striker Troy Parrott.

The Dubliner has already been included in Spurs' first-team squad and he will no doubt be one of those Kenny will be monitoring closely.

Sean Creedon

Sergio Ramos

European champions deny doping allegations made against captain

Real Madrid have denied captain Sergio Ramos failed a drugs test after the 2017 Champions League Final. A report in German magazine *Der Spiegel* – released as part of the "Football Leaks" series – claimed Ramos failed to declare he had taken dexamethasone ahead of the Final in Cardiff, in which Real beat Juventus 4-1.

Dexamethasone is a corticosteroid which is banned under World Anti-Doping Agency guidelines, unless administered with a medical report. It can have anti-inflammatory effects and increase concentration.

Der Spiegel claims the Real Madrid team doctor registered betamethasone instead of dexamethasone in his official report. The doctor wrote that Ramos was given betamethasone to help with problems in his shoulder and knee.

Real Madrid later admitted reporting the wrong treatment to UEFA, attributing it to "human error" in the aftermath of the final celebrations. *Der Spiegel* reported that UEFA was satisfied with the explanation and took no disciplinary action.

In further allegations, *Der Spiegel* also claimed that, after a game against Malaga in April, Ramos refused to give a urine sample without taking a shower first. This is against anti-doping protocol, but Ramos was reported to be concerned about missing the team bus.

It was also alleged that Madrid interfered with the work of anti-doping officials carrying out random tests on 10 players at their training ground in February 2017. Tests were carried out on Cristiano Ronaldo and Toni Kroos, but there had allegedly been a disagreement and Madrid's own doctors carried out the remaining eight tests, which is also against protocol.

> "UEFA strongly and categorically refutes unfounded allegations it has covered up positive doping results"

In a statement, Real Madrid said: "Sergio Ramos has never breached the anti-doping control regulations. UEFA requested timely information and closed the matter immediately, as is usual in these cases, after verification by the experts themselves of the World Anti-Doping Agency, AMA and of UEFA itself."

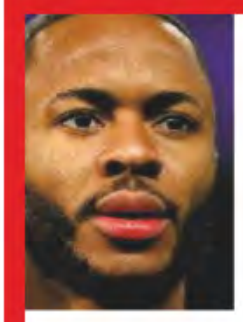
The European governing body, in a statement, said: "UEFA strongly and categorically refutes unfounded allegations it has covered up positive doping results. All UEFA doping control cases are conducted in full compliance with the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) Code.

"UEFA has informed both WADA and FIFA of all such cases, as required by the WADA Code, and UEFA has provided all detailed information, expert reports and evidence during the handling of such cases. It must be underlined that both WADA and FIFA have the right to appeal any decision taken by UEFA on doping control matters to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS).

"However, neither WADA nor FIFA did lodge any such appeal to CAS, and WADA itself has officially confirmed that everything was dealt with appropriately by UEFA and in accordance with the Code."

John Holmesdale

Final..Ramos (right) in 2017 against Juventus



Raheem Sterling

Man City star sparks wider debate after tackling media over racism

Raheem Sterling has been in outstanding form for both club and country this season, starring and scoring in the Nations League for England as they won in Spain, while his performances for Manchester City were recognised with an award as the Premier League's player of the month for November.

However, it is events off the pitch that have proved far more significant.

After he was racially abused by Chelsea supporters at Stamford Bridge, Sterling used social media to not only highlight the abuse but also to express his concern about the wider portrayal of black players by traditional media, notably tabloid newspapers.

The morning after City's 2-0 defeat at Chelsea, he took the unusual step of posting a message to his 4.2million followers on Instagram. He commented on the incident but, more significantly, highlighted the different newspaper coverage afforded to two young City players, one black, one white.

The players in question, Tosin Adarabioyo and Phil Foden, had both bought houses for family members, but the stories had been reported in markedly different ways.

"I just want to say I am not normally the person to talk a lot, but when I think I need my point to be heard I will speak up," Sterling wrote. "Regarding what was said at the Chelsea game, as you can see by my reaction I just had to laugh because I don't expect any better."

"But look how the newspapers get their message across for the young black player and then for the young white player. I think this is unacceptable.

"Both innocents have not done a thing wrong, but just by the way it has been worded this young black kid is looked at in a bad light. It helps fuel racism and aggressive behaviour. So, for all the newspapers that don't understand why people are racist in this day and age, all I have to say is have a second thought about fair publicity and give all players an equal chance."

> "At the Chelsea game, as you can see by my reaction, I just had to laugh because I don't expect any better"

By highlighting the wider issue of stereotypical reporting within the media, Sterling sparked a debate about racism within football and society in general, and he was backed by his club manager, Pep Guardiola, who said: "I spoke with him when I arrived and he was active on social media and Instagram and I told him to protect his private life, and he did.

"He's less active than when he was young, more mature, on and off the pitch – he has two kids. I don't know the reason why. Hopefully the criticism [only] is when he plays shit, he plays bad.

"But just for the colour of his skin – believe me that's ridiculous and that's why everyone...we have to protect from that situation. The media, of course [has a responsibility], everyone and everywhere has. You can write something and offend, create a conflict. Today the real power is the media, not politicians, not the governments, it's the media. That's why you have the possibility."

Of Sterling's wider comment about racism, Guardiola added: "Racism is everywhere; people focus on football but it's not just in football.

"How we treat immigrants and refugees, when once in our lives our grandfathers were refugees. How we treat them in society – it's everywhere. That's why we have to fight every day."

John Holmesdale

Reaction...refusing to be provoked

eyewitness

Sid Lowe in Madrid

LIBERTADORES CUP

The *Superclasico* comes to town

The military machines rolled down the Castella early on Sunday morning, armoured vehicles pulling up on the city's biggest, most emblematic avenue. Above, helicopters hovered. Police stood, fingers on the triggers of guns, while snipers took up positions on rooftops. People walked down the middle of the road, closed off to cars. As the day went on, more and more of them came, heading towards the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium.

Real Madrid's home has hosted the Spanish Cup Final – albeit they have refused in recent years, as Barcelona have found their way there – the Champions League Final and the World Cup Final. It was there that Spain won their first European title, defeating the Soviet Union. And every year it hosts the world's biggest club match, between the planet's biggest clubs. Well, maybe the second biggest perhaps...

If Madrid-Barca is the *Clasico*, Boca-River is the *Superclasico*. And this was the biggest, most intense *Superclasico* of them all: River versus Boca in the Final of the Libertadores Cup, the trophy named after those who liberated South America, now packed up and played in the capital of the old imperial power. Some called it the Copa Conquistadores. The Bernabeu had seen it all, but nothing quite like this.

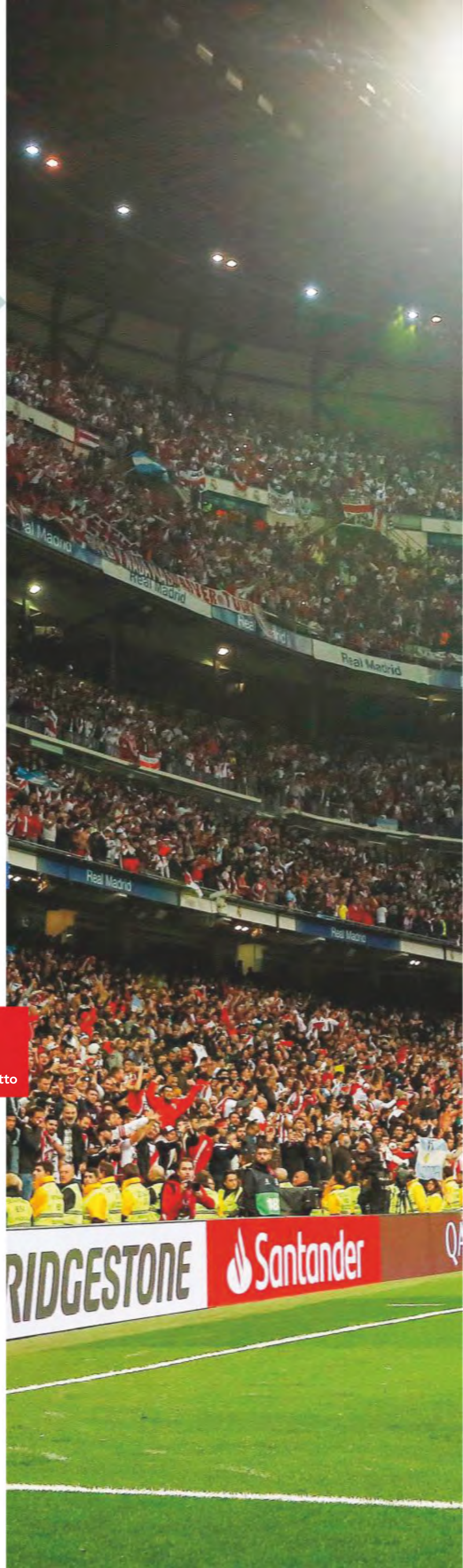
There had been a fight for the game to be cancelled, a decision placed before a judge, but it went ahead in the end. The never-ending match finally ended in Madrid – 10,000km from where it was supposed to be played, after Boca's bus was attacked, windows smashed and players hurt.

It was two weeks late and it had taken five attempts. It had taken four fantastic goals and extra time too, with the game still in the balance until the last second, the ball hitting one post and then being run up the other end and into an empty net, with the Boca goalkeeper caught out attacking. I had seen a biblical storm and trouble on the streets, police charges, shots fired, tear-gas too. Its impact will be felt for years, and everywhere. But it was, eventually, over.

"As far as I'm concerned, it's finished," said Boca boss Guillermo Barros ▸

> "As far as I'm concerned, it's finished River won"
> **Boca coach Guillermo Barros Schelotto**

Watchful...riot police observe Boca Juniors supporters making their way to the Santiago Bernabeu



Adulation...River's Gonzalo Martinez celebrates

Schelotto. "River won."

So did Spain. Whether it was right that it ever had the chance to is another issue but that was the conclusion.

"River reigned on Di Stefano's field," as the sports daily *AS* put it. Its front cover ran: "River won, Madrid won." The stadium had become the centre of world football, hosting a game attended by players from Juventus, Bayern Munich, Barcelona and Madrid. Lionel Messi was there, Antoine Griezmann too. Diego Simeone showed. As did politicians, judges and celebrities. It had become an event as much as a match.

Madrid had been offered up as a solution and CONMEBOL leapt at it. Many in Spain celebrated the fact, which always felt a little grubby, given the gleefulness of it all. However well it went, it always felt like this would be tinged with sadness at the way that it had been taken from its rightful place, and at the reasons why it was taken – some of which are still debated, some of which were painfully clear.

> "Spain had shown it could host a huge event and at short notice, which will be good for when the World Cup bid comes – which it will"

There were some concerns, of course. Much was made of the security set up, the police operation, of *barra bravas* turned away at Barajas airport, of the possible problems. The military set up on the Sunday was unlike anything ever seen, even in 2010 when Internazionale met Bayern. The streets were closed, security checks intense, queues starting a long way from the stadium.

And it worked. Or maybe it was simpler than that; maybe people just behaved perfectly. There was no trouble, which the Spanish were proud of, keen to stress that the policing had been effective and so had the logistics. Spain had shown it could host a huge event and at short notice, which will be good for when the World Cup bid comes – which it will.

Victorious... celebrations in Madrid

River party...police in Buenos Aires try to disperse fans

At the same time, handily for Spain, maybe Argentina had shown that they could not.

There had also been over €40m generated by the weekend, or so the figures said. Spain had put on a show, and they were delighted with it. The doubts had been forgotten.

Few in Spain questioned whether it was right, still less when a successful night came to an end. It had certainly been fun. They felt that they had handed out a lesson, offered up an impeccable image of the country.

They always hoped that might be the case and from the start there had been a sense of curiosity and civic pride; they had really embraced the occasion.

The game was infused with a huge importance: for a week or more, South America's biggest game eclipsed all else in Spain, dominating media coverage, filling hours on the radio and pages in the papers: a dozen daily in the sports titles, and the first dozen too.

Tickets had sold instantly when they were offered to Real Madrid members and then to the public in Spain, although it soon became clear that some had snapped them up hoping to cash in. Difficulties in travelling for the match and the cost of the tickets – €80 was the cheapest – meant that the market was not eventually quite as buoyant as they had anticipated. As the game approached, more tickets were discreetly offered up, more put on sale. The Spanish papers declared that the stadium had been full, but the upper centre of the two ends had been covered with a tarpaulin.

There were over 70,000 there,

though. River occupied the north stand, Boca the south. In theory, they had around 7,000 tickets each. Spain's Argentinian population helped fill the other seats, while Boca and River fans from the rest of Europe travelled too. Spaniards – and Europeans – bought tickets, keen to see something unique, an opportunity they would never have again.

Only what they were buying – the most passionate clash in the world, the ultimate expression of Argentina, the seduction of something untamed, so different to what the game here had become – was not what they found.

It was noisy, very noisy, like the biggest Champions League games at the Bernabeu, although it inevitably lacked some of the authenticity of Argentina. It lacked the paraphernalia too: the fireworks, the flags, the banners, the ticker tape. It lacked none of the passion on the pitch though, right to the last second.

And then River's fans headed into the Puerta del Sol to celebrate their Libertadores title in another city and another continent, over 6,000 miles from El Monumental. WS

Checks...fans wait to access the stadium

Tim Vickery Comment

Quintero steals the show

Colombian proves a game-changing sub

Super-sub... Juan Quintero

The choice of Madrid as the emergency venue of the 2018 Final could hardly have been more politically insensitive, provoking a predictably angry reaction – much of it justified, some of it pure hypocrisy. Veteran Boca striker Carlos Tevez, for example, complained: "We have been robbed of the dream of doing the lap of honour in River's stadium."

But he is surely well aware that, after the incidents of November 24 in Buenos Aires, had the game taken place at River in front of a crowd, Boca would not have turned up – and justifiably so.

The most flagrant breach of the regulations would have been for River Plate to go unpunished. This made it extremely hard to think of a way in which the game could have gone ahead in Argentina. Played behind closed doors – a policing nightmare – would have been the only solution.

But River are claiming that they have no responsibility for the action of their fans. And Boca, in an exaggerated payback for 2015, argue that River should be disqualified. The lack of any conception of a concept of common good was yet another argument for taking the game elsewhere.

Madrid stepped in, and CONMEBOL breathed a huge sigh of relief. The Spanish capital would take responsibility for security arrangements. And cash-strapped CONMEBOL would have some content to supply to all of those around the world who had bought the TV rights. The game would go ahead in a magnificent stadium, with atmosphere guaranteed. For all the criticisms of lack of authenticity, this would be a match watched by two sets of supporters – something that has not happened in Argentina for six years.

And in purely footballing terms, there was something entirely fitting about staging the occasion in the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium. The Libertadores was South America's response to the success of the European Cup – an idea which could have been premature, but which worked in large part as a consequence of the superb football played by Real Madrid, whose team was built around Alfredo Di Stefano.

The last and the greatest product of Argentinian football's 1940s golden age, Di Stefano made his name playing for River Plate. And, the first team he coached in Argentina was Boca Juniors. And so it was appropriate that the two Buenos Aires giants met on the field graced by Di Stefano – and just as appropriate that a Colombian, Juan Quintero,

Decisive...Quintero puts River ahead in extra-time

ended up stealing the show.

In between playing for River Plate and changing the course of European history with Real Madrid, Di Stefano was lured north to Bogota, where he was the main man in a magnificent Millonarios side who did so much to ensure a successful launch for the Colombian league.

Colombia swooped when Argentina's players went on strike, with lots of big names being lured north to the new, high-paying championship. With Di Stefano playing the lead role, they left a legacy of imaginative and artistic passing football – and a worthy inheritor of the tradition ended up winning the 2018 Libertadores for River Plate.

For a long time, though, it looked as if Boca would prevail. River were badly missing the mobility of another Colombian, suspended striker Rafael Santos Borre. While River's attack looked static, Boca could sit deep and look to launch the counter attack. And they deservedly took the lead by that route shortly before half time, when Nahitan Nandez split the opposition defence for Dario Benedetto to produce a classy piece of movement and finishing.

It seemed set up for Boca to pick off their rivals on the break in the second half. But they were surely too passive – which was to cost them the game and ultimately cost coach Guillermo Barros Schelotto his job.

Just after the hour, Benedetto was substituted. Returning from long-term injury, he had been used to great effect as a late substitute in the previous games,

Champions...River Plate with the trophy they won for a fourth time

but now as a starter he was unlikely to last the 90 minutes. However, maybe he was withdrawn too soon and Boca's attack lost its focal point.

The body language on the bench seemed to suggest that Boca believed they were almost home and dry – but just four minutes earlier River had gambled in taking off holding midfielder Leonardo Ponzio and bringing on Colombian playmaker Quintero.

Like a figure stepping out of the pages of an old black-and-white football annual, Quintero can seem to belong to a bygone age. But 2018 had been a wonderful year for the left-footed playmaker, who rediscovered his focus after a period in the wilderness. His ability to see and play the pass changed the game and his prompting from deep allowed attacking midfielder Nacho Fernandez to push higher. A Quintero plant, a quick exchange between Fernandez and Exequiel Palacios, and the Boca defence was opened up. Lucas Pratto swept home – and from that point, Boca were hanging on.

At the start of extra-time Boca lost holding midfielder Wilmar Barrios to a second yellow card, and with space opening up Quintero took control before finding the room to fire home from the edge of the area.

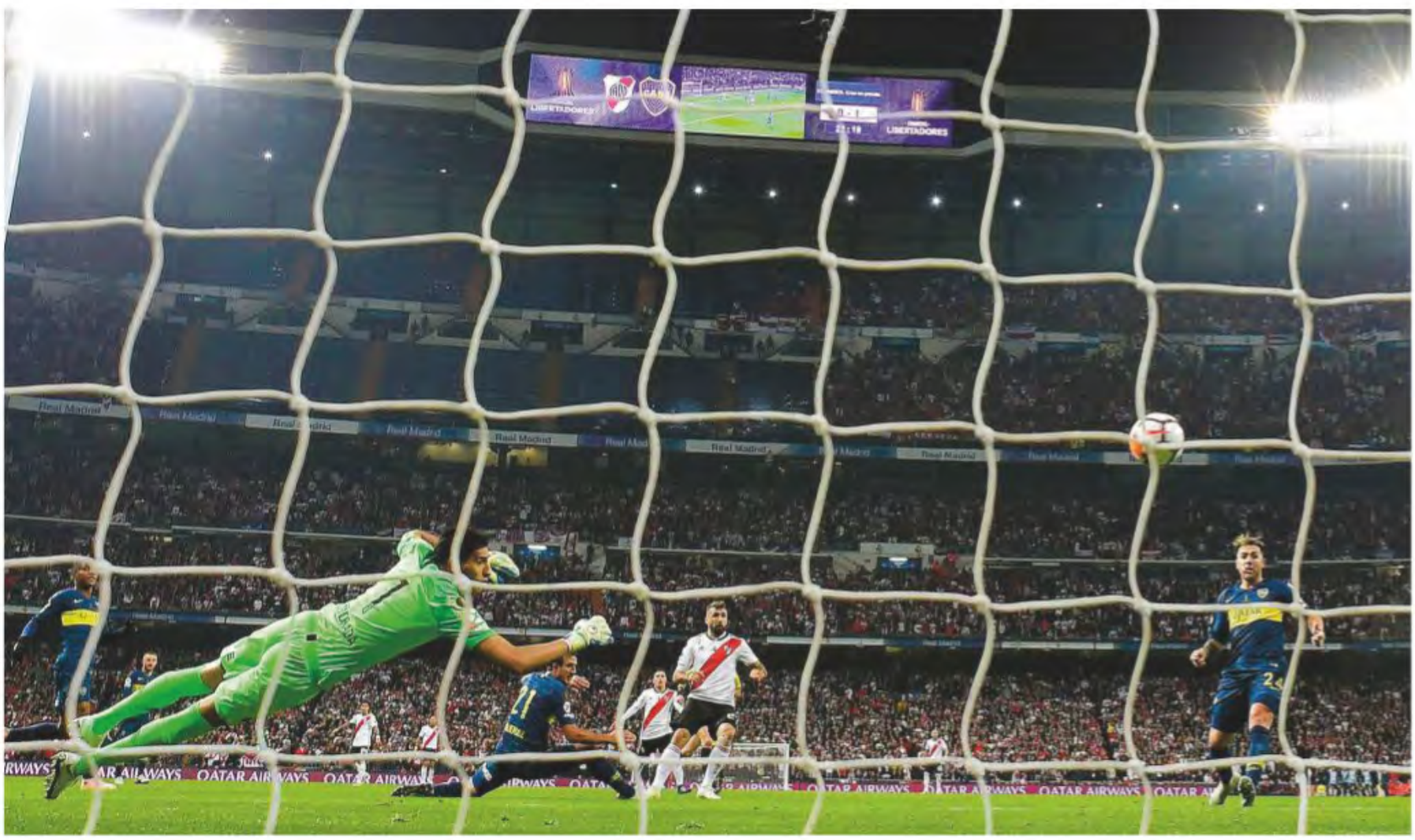
His goal set up an insane last 12

> Like a figure stepping out of the pages of an old black-and-white football annual, Quintero can seem to belong to a bygone age

minutes. Down to nine after Fernando Gago snapped an Achilles tendon, Boca strove for an equaliser to take the game to penalties. Centre-backs became centre forwards, and keeper Esteban Andrada was spending much of his time in the opposing penalty area. Leo Jara even glanced a post with a shot.

But it was no surprise when they were caught, and Quintero slipped Gonzalo Martinez to race away and seal the historic victory in the biggest Boca-River game of all time...unless, of course, Boca win the day in the Court of Arbitration for Sport, where they are pushing for River's disqualification. WS

Equaliser...Lucas Pratto levels



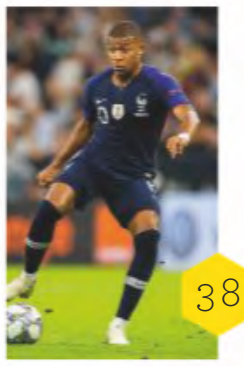
WorldSoccer Awards 2018

THE RESULTS OF OUR 36TH ANNUAL AWARDS – AND THE PEOPLE WHO HELPED SHAPE THE GAME OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS

PLAYER
TEAM
MANAGER
PEOPLE
OBITUARIES

34

40



38

36

37

WORLD SOCCER AWARDS 2018

Croatia's Luka Modric lands the big prize

The Ronaldo–Messi duopoly has finally been broken, with Luka Modric named *World Soccer*'s World Player of the Year for 2018, ending the long domination of the award by Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi.

Modric has been recognised for his role for both club and country in 2018: winning a fourth European Cup in five years with Real Madrid and then playing a leading role in Croatia's unexpected passage to the summer's World Cup Final in Moscow.

Forwards and attacking midfielders have dominated these awards since their inception in 1982.

Fabio Cannavaro (2006) and Paolo Maldini (1994) are the only defenders to have been recognised, with Xavi (2010) and Lothar Matthaus (1990) the only previous central midfielders to win the award.

Modric's victory – which was the 10th in a row for either a Real Madrid or Barcelona player – is yet another for the Spanish Liga. Real Madrid players have now won the award eight times, a

tally which is second to Barcelona's 10, but more than Juventus (seven) and Milan (six).

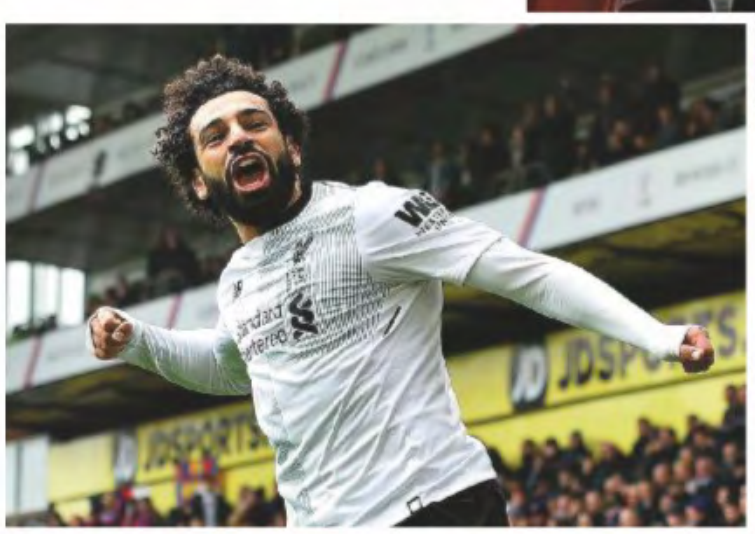
Modric is the first Croatian winner and only the second from Eastern Europe, after Pavel Nedved in 2003. He was challenged most closely by last year's winner Ronaldo, while four-times winner Messi finished in fourth place.

Votes for players from France's World Cup-winning team were split, with Kylian Mbappe (third) the highest ranked, ahead of Antoine Griezmann (fifth) and Raphael Varane (ninth).

The performance of the World Cup's third-placed team Belgium was also recognised with top-10 placings for Eden Hazard (seventh) and Kevin De Bruyne (eighth), while the tournament's top scorer, Harry Kane of England, finished 10th.

Mohamed Salah's achievements in reaching the Champions League Final with Liverpool and helping Egypt to their first World Cup for 28 years were recognised with a sixth-place finish, making him the highest-placed African.

In the World Manager of the Year award, France coach Didier Deschamps was the clear winner, ahead of last year's number one, Zinedine Zidane, who guided Real Madrid to a third successive Champions League title before abruptly quitting.



Achievement...Liverpool's Mohamed Salah had a season to remember

Deschamps joined an elite group who have won the World Cup as both a player and a coach and is the sixth Frenchman to win the World Manager award.

Zlatko Dalic, whose Croatia side were overcome by France in the World Cup Final, finished in third place. Pep Guardiola, boss of English league champions Manchester City, was fourth, ahead of Gareth Southgate, who steered England to a surprise semi-final place at the World Cup, and Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp, who was runner-up in yet another European Final after his side's defeat in Kiev against Real Madrid.

France, following the pattern of World Cup winners usually being recognised in a World Cup year, won the World Team of the Year award, ahead of European champions Real Madrid. World Cup runners-up Croatia were third, with Manchester City fourth.

The *World Soccer* awards were

Previous World Player winners

1980s

1982 Paolo Rossi
Juventus & Italy
1983 Zico
Udinese & Brazil
1984 Michel Platini
Juventus & France
1985 Michel Platini
Juventus & France
1986 Diego Maradona
Napoli & Argentina
1987 Ruud Gullit
Milan & Holland
1988 Marco Van Basten
Milan & Holland
1989 Ruud Gullit
Milan & Holland

1990s

1990 Lothar Matthaus
Internazionale & West Germany
1991 Jean-Pierre Papin
Marseille & France
1992 Marco Van Basten
Milan & Holland
1993 Roberto Baggio
Juventus & Italy
1994 Paolo Maldini
Milan & Italy
1995 Gianluca Vialli
Juventus & Italy
1996 Ronaldo
Barcelona & Brazil
1997 Ronaldo
Barcelona/Internazionale & Brazil
1998 Zinedine Zidane
Juventus & France
1999 Rivaldo
Barcelona & Brazil

2000s

2000 Luis Figo
Barcelona/Real Madrid & Portugal
2001 Michael Owen
Liverpool & England
2002 Ronaldo
Internazionale/Real Madrid & Brazil
2003 Pavel Nedved
Juventus & Czech Republic
2004 Ronaldinho
Barcelona & Brazil
2005 Ronaldinho
Barcelona & Brazil
2006 Fabio Cannavaro
Juventus/Real Madrid & Italy
2007 Kaka
Milan & Brazil
2008 Cristiano Ronaldo
Manchester United & Portugal
2009 Lionel Messi
Barcelona & Argentina

2010s

2010 Xavi
Barcelona & Spain
2011 Lionel Messi
Barcelona & Argentina
2012 Lionel Messi
Barcelona & Argentina
2013 Cristiano Ronaldo
Real Madrid & Portugal
2014 Cristiano Ronaldo
Real Madrid & Portuga
2015 Lionel Messi
Barcelona & Argentina
2016 Cristiano Ronaldo
Real Madrid & Portugal
2017 Cristiano Ronaldo
Real Madrid & Portugal

The boss...Didier Deschamps with his World Cup-winnng side

"France, following the pattern of World Cup winners usually being recognised in a World Cup year, won the World Team of the Year award"

decided by votes from an international panel of 80 journalists and pundits, who all chose their top 10 players of the year, with points then awarded to each selection. Ten points were awards to each first choice, down to one point for a 10th choice.

● *Full details of how the panel voted are available at worldsoccer.com.*

First winner...Paolo Rossi of Italy in 1982

Rnk	Name	Pts
PLAYER OF THE YEAR		
1	**Luka Modric** *Real Madrid & Croatia*	706
2	**Cristiano Ronaldo** *Real Madrid/Juventus & Portugal*	576
3	**Kylian Mbappe** *Monaco/PSG & France*	486
4	**Lionel Messi** *Barcelona & Argentina*	452
5	**Antoine Griezmann** *Atletico Madrid & France*	391
6	**Mohamed Salah** *Liverpool & Egypt*	352
7	**Eden Hazard** *Chelsea & Belgium*	326
8	**Kevin De Bruyne** *Manchester City & Belgium*	219
9	**Raphael Varane** *Real Madrid & France*	185
10	**Harry Kane** *Tottenham & England*	142
11	**Neymar** *PSG & Brazil*	74
12	**N'Golo Kante** *Chelsea & France*	57
13	**Sergio Ramos** *Real Madrid & Spain*	37
14	**Ivan Rakitic** *Barcelona & Croatia*	30
15=	**Marcelo** *Real Madrid & Brazil*	26
15=	**Luis Suarez** *Barcelona & Uruguay*	26
17	**David Silva** *Manchester City & Spain*	25
18	**Paulo Dybala** *Juventus & Argentina*	19
19	**Sergio Aguero** *Manchester City & Argentina*	16
20	**Ivan Perisic** *Internazionale & Croatia*	15
21	**Thibaut Courtois** *Chelsea/R Madrid & Belgium*	14
21=	**Toni Kroos** *Real Madrid & Germany*	14
23=	**Casemiro** *Real Madrid & Brazil*	13
23=	**Mario Mandzukic** *Juventus & Germany*	13
25	**Edinson Cavani** *PSG & Uruguay*	12
26=	**Eriksen** *Tottenham & Denmark*	10
26=	**Keylor Navas** *Real Madrid & Costa Rica*	10
26=	**Virgil Van Dijk** *Liverpool & Holland*	10
26=	**Wu Lei** *Shanghai SIPG & China*	10
30	**Dani Carvajal** *Real Madrid & Spain*	9
21=	**Sadio Mane** *Liverpool & Senegal*	8
21=	**Robert Lewandowski** *Bayern Munich & Poland*	8
23=	**Isco** *Real Madrid & Spain*	7
23=	**David De Gea** *Manchester United & Spain*	7
23=	**Diego Godin** *Atletico Madrid & Uruguay*	7
23=	**Raheem Sterling** *Manchester City & England*	7
27=	**Hugo Lloris** *Tottenham & France*	6
27=	**Paul Pogba** *Manchester United & France*	6
29=	**Clint Dempsey** *Seattle Sounders & USA*	5
29=	**Marco Reus** *Borussia Dortmund & Germany*	5
29=	**Omar Khribin** *Al Hilal (Sau) & Syria*	5
32=	**Alisson** *Roma/Liverpool & Brazil*	4
32=	**Luka Jovic** *Eintracht Frankfurt & Germany*	4
32=	**Dries Mertens** *Napoli & Belgium*	4
32=	**Son Heung-min** *Tottenham & South Korea*	4
32=	**Chanathip Songkrasin** *Muangthong United/Consadole Sapporo & Thailand*	4
38=	**Karim Benzema** *Real Madrid & France*	3
38=	**Blaise Matuidi** *Juventus & France*	3
40=	**Danijel Subasic** *Monaco & Croatia*	2
40=	**Mauro Icardi** *Internazionale & Argentina*	3
42=	**Dani Alves** *PSG & Brazil*	2
42=	**Gareth Bale** *Real Madrid & Wales*	2
42=	**Olivier Giroud** *Chelsea & France*	2
42=	**Jordan Pickford** *Everton & England*	2
42=	**John Stones** *Manchester City & England*	2
47=	**Leonardo Bonucci** *Milan/Juventus & Italy*	1
47=	**Hirving Lozano** *PSV & Mexico*	1
47=	**Romelu Lukaku** *Manchester United & Belgium*	1
WORLD MANAGER OF THE YEAR		
1	**Didier Deschamps**	42
2	**Zinedine Zidane**	15
3	**Zlatko Dalic**	9
4	**Pep Guardiola**	8
5	**Gareth Southgate**	3
6	**Jurgen Klopp**	2
WORLD TEAM OF THE YEAR		
1	**France**	53
2	**Real Madrid**	11
3	**Croatia**	9
4	**Manchester City**	5
5	**Juventus**	2
6	**Liverpool**	1

Flying high... Eden Hazard

THE VOTING PANEL

Paddy Agnew	*Italy*
Juan Carlos Aguero	*Costa Rica*
Domenic Aquilina	*Malta*
Sam Beckwith	*Czech Republic*
Giuseppe Bergomi	*Italy*
Nick Bidwell	*England*
Alexander Bobrov	*Russia*
Boris Bogdanov	*Russia*
Carlos Carpio	*Spain*
Gabriel Cazenave	*Paraguay*
Francois Colin	*Belgium*
Dez Corkhill	*Malaysia*
Sean Creedon	*Rep of Ireland*
Peterjon Cresswell	*Hungary*
Vicente Dattoli	*Brazil*
Steve Darby	*England*
Jan Hermen De Bruijn	*Holland*
Martin Del Palacio	*Mexico*
Les Dickens	*Ecuador*
Klaas-Jan Droppert	*Holland*
Jerzy Dudek	*Poland*
John Duerden	*Asia*
Christian Eichler	*Germany*
Claudia Ekai	*Kenya*
Adel Ferdowsipour	*Iran*
Mark Gleeson	*South Africa*
Miron Goihman	*Moldova*
Phil Gordon	*Scotland*
Rex Gowar	*Argentina*
Victor Gusev	*Russia*
Skapti Hallgrimsson	*Iceland*
Luis Herrera	*Mexico*
Simon Hill	*Australia*
Jim Holden	*England*
Sasa Ibrulj	*Bosnia-Herzegovina*
Howard Johnson	*France*
Brian Kerr	*Rep of Ireland*
Ali Khaled	*UAE*
Roy Kitson	*Northern Ireland*
Tom Kundert	*Portugal*
Samindra Kunti	*Belgium*
Dariusz Kurowski	*Poland*
Lasana Liburd	*Trinidad & Tobago*
Fabio Licari	*Italy*
Andrew McKirdy	*Japan*
Abdulrahman Magdy	*Egypt*
Mehmet Cagri Davran	*Turkey*
Steve Menary	*England*
Glenn Moore	*England*
Rasim Movsumzadeh	*Azerbaijan*
Andres Must	*Estonia*
Gezim Nushi	*Albania*
Oluwashina Okeleji	*Nigeria*
Michael Oti Adjei	*Ghana*
Vladimir Novak	*Serbia*
Dejan Panic	*Montenegro*
Rumen Paytashev	*Bulgaria*
Diego Paz	*Honduras*
Mike Plastow	*Japan*
Ashok Purohit	*Oman*
Keir Radnedge	*England*
Emanuel Rosu	*Romania*
Kereem Ruiz	*Mexico*
Seo Hyung-wook	*South Korea*
Milorad Stojmanovski	*Macedonia*
Manos Staramopoulos	*Greece*
Jacques Sys	*Belgium*
Rok Tamse	*Slovenia*
Troels Bager Thogersen	*Denmark*
Clive Tyldesley	*England*
Martin Tyler	*England*
Cees Van Cuilenborg	*Holland*
Vijhay Vick	*Malaysia*
Cameron Wilson	*China*
Wolfgang Winheim	*Austria*
Carl Worswick	*Colombia*
Ouahib Yazid	*Algeria*
Oleg Zadernovsky	*Ukraine*
Wladyslaw Zmuda	*Poland*

PLAYER

LUKA **MODRIC**

World Player Of The Year

The cover of *World Soccer*'s March 2017 issue featured Luka Modric with the line "The World's Best Midfielder?" The Croatian's performances for European Champions Real Madrid had been crucial to his club's success, but the media spotlight had all too often fallen upon his more headline-hungry team-mates, notably Cristiano Ronaldo.

The question mark is no longer needed. Not only has Modric been the world's best midfielder over the past 12 months, his elevation to the status of best player on the planet is now complete.

His role in helping Madrid to a fourth Champions League in five seasons would have been enough to make him a contender for the World Player of the Year award, alongside the likes of perennial winners Ronaldo and Lionel Messi. But it was in helping raise Croatia to the status of World Cup runners-up that saw him overtake the Portuguese

Winner...with the 2018 Champions League trophy

and Argentinian, both of whom failed to live up to expectations on the world's biggest stage last summer.

The Croatia team of 1998, which lost to France in the World Cup semi-finals in Paris, arguably contained more natural talent in the shape of Zvonimir Boban, Robert Prosinecki, Davor Suker, Robert Jarni et al. But that memorable side has been surpassed by the class of 2018, orchestrated and directed by Modric.

As Spain, Germany, Argentina and Brazil fell by the wayside in Russia, Modric was the man who lifted his team to a higher level. His talents, both creative and physical, allowed his team-mates to flourish. With long pinpoint passes as well as sharp, competitive challenges, his full range of qualities was on display.

It is rare for a player to star for both

Threat...troubling Liverpool in Kiev

FACT FILE

Age 33 (09.09.85)
Club Real Madrid (Spa)
Country Croatia
Previous clubs NK Zadar, Dinamo Zagreb, Zrinjski Mostar (Bos, loan), Inter Zapresic (loan), Tottenham Hotspur (Eng)
Honours Champions League 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018; Club World Cup 2014, 2016, 2017; European Super Cup 2014, 2016, 2017; Spanish League 2017; Spanish Cup 2014; Croatian League 2006, 2007, 2008; Croatian Cup 2006, 2007

club and country in the same season but only a few weeks after he had celebrated winning the Champions League with Real Madrid in Kiev, Modric was named the best player of the World Cup.

He still regrets the French victory in the Final and says: "The second goal [Antoine Griezmann's penalty] was a turning point. We were surprised it was given because of the free-kick the referee gave for the first goal which wasn't a free-kick in my opinion.

"We recovered after the first goal and when we played our best football he gave a penalty and it kills you.

"I think we were unlucky to lose. We played well and I think we were the better team but sometimes better teams don't win. We have to be proud with how we played but it wasn't enough to win it."

Croatia are the latest in a long line of east European countries who have been raised from the pack by an extraordinary individual: Bulgaria with Hristo Stoichkov, Gheorghe Hagi's Romania, the Ukraine of Andriy Shevchenko.

Modric is Croatia's greatest-ever player and arguably the best to have emerged from the region of the former Yugoslavia, yet his modesty is disarming.

When questioned about the house he had built in his adopted hometown of Zadar, he replied: "People ask me why it's only a mini villa. They want to know why it's so small. There's only four of us [wife Vanja, son Ivano and daughter Ema]. What are we supposed to do with the five or six rooms we don't use?"

Zadar, on Croatia's Adriatic coast, is where the Modric clan – Luka, father Stipe, mother Radojka and younger sister Jasmina – sought refuge during the Yugoslav civil war in the early 1990s. They had been forced to flee their home on the slopes on the Velebit mountains in northern Dalmatia following the murder by Serb paramilitaries of Luka's grandfather.

Luka was only six at the time and the family were housed in one of the largest hotels in the town, the Kolovare. But there was little respite from the war, as Zadar came under constant Serb bombardment by both land and sea. It was while kicking a ball along the corridors of the hotel that the youngster came to the attention of local club NK Zadar.

Training sessions often came under fire from mortar attacks but Zadar nurtured the young Modric, despite his diminutive frame and lack of stature.

A major setback came in the form of rejection by Hajduk Split when aged 12. But the head of the Zadar youth academy, Tomislav Basic, encouraged him to keep the faith, working with him to improve his fragile physique.

"Without him, I wouldn't be where I am now," Modric says of Basic, who died in 2014.

Croatia's leading club Dinamo Zagreb signed him at the age of 16 and two years later, in the summer of 2003, he headed for Bosnian club Zrinjski Mostar on loan, a move that proved to be his making.

He learnt how to be a midfield all-rounder in Bosnia and was voted the league's best player, aged just 18.

After another loan spell, at Croat first-division side Inter Zapresic, he was ready for Dinamo, where his performances would attract attention from Europe's elite clubs. In the end, Tottenham Hotspur beat a host of European heavyweights, including Barcelona, to his signature, signing him for £16.5million in 2008.

The transfer to England from Zagreb would later come back to haunt Modric when he was charged in 2018 with perjury for providing false testimony in the trial of Zdravko Mamic, the all-powerful former Dinamo executive who had allegedly siphoned off money from deals involving a number of Croatia internationals, including Modric and fellow international Dejan Lovren, who was also charged.

Charges against Modric were dropped in October, but not before the case had damaged his reputation back home.

Now in his seventh season with Madrid, Modric has a contract until 2020, when he will turn 35.

A rumoured contract extension, reportedly promised after he rejected a post World Cup move to Internazionale, has not yet materialised.

For the moment, however, Luka Modric has more than enough to celebrate.

John Holmesdale

> "I think we were unlucky to lose. We played well and I think we were the better team but sometimes better teams don't win"
> *On the World Cup defeat by France*

Pride...representing his country in Russia in the summer

COACH/TEAM

DIDIER DESCHAMPS & FRANCE

World Manager Of The Year, World Team Of The Year

France coach Didier Deschamps was the calmest man in the French camp as they made their way to the World Cup Final in Moscow last summer.

"I was calm and zen during the competition," he told *Le Parisien*. "You want to know why? Because I've won this cup [as a player]."

"I always slept at ease. Much better than in 2014. I didn't end up tired. I managed to sleep, even in the worst of situations. I didn't even have to take any medication to sleep. I managed without biting my nails, even though I've been doing it for 45 years. I should have been stressed but I wasn't."

Deschamps became only the third person – after Brazil's Mario Zagallo and Franz Beckenbauer of Germany – to have won the World Cup as both a player and a coach.

Deschamps, of course, was the French captain in 1998 and two years later when they won the European Championship. He was also famously dismissed by Eric Cantona as a "water carrier" but then went on to enjoy a spectacularly successful career – unlike Cantona, who Michel Platini said was "big in small games and a small player in big games" and who has enjoyed more success in cinemas than he did with France.

As well as calmness, Deschamps brought modesty of the role of national coach. "When you're a player, you're an actor on the pitch and you're implicated," he says. "My staff's accomplishment is thanks to my players, which is why you

World champion...both as a player (above) and a coach (right)

can never take that away from them. It belongs to them. When it doesn't work, the coach is responsible 95 per cent of the time, but when things work it's the opposite. But it doesn't bother me at all.

"I'm just as happy for them as I am for myself, if not more! I was totally immersed. I didn't want to be distracted.

"I was with my group, my staff, who are important to my work. My staff was incredible. There was a true feeling of solidarity with my 20 staff members."

The chaotic scenes in the press conference after the Final in Moscow, when players invaded the stage and drenched their coach with water, show the affection with which he is held by his players.

France were among the favourites going into the tournament but Deschamps knew all about the dangers of holding such a status, having been humiliated as world champions in 2002 in South Korea.

Two years later, on home soil in the European Championship, his side came up short again, this time against Portugal.

"France will be on the roof of the world for four years," he says. "It's a great accolade. The memories and emotions remain, but the titles more so because we're competitive athletes.

"It's more difficult to win trophies with your national team than at club level, where there are more opportunities. You only have the chance once every two years with your national team.

"In 2016 we let an incredible opportunity get away, even though we realise that it was a learning experience in hindsight. We were able to approach this World Cup differently."

Only goalkeeper Hugo Lloris remained from the squad that left the 2010 World Cup prematurely in disgrace, while Deschamps made plenty of changes from the squad that finished runners-up in Paris in 2016

"At the Euros we had quite a few players over 30 and I took the option in this World Cup to take 14 players who had never played in a big international tournament," explains the coach.

The players who featured at Euro 2016 – Lloris, Paul Pogba, Raphael Varane, Antoine Griezmann and Olivier Giroud – became key figures in Russia. None more so than Pogba, of whom Deschamps says: "For the younger players, he's an example.

"He played in the 2014 World Cup in Brazil and Euro 2016 in France. He's part of a transitional generation. We often say and repeat that the team lacks leaders and personality – but no, they showed that during the tournament!"

The youngsters selected by Deschamps, included the previously unheralded defenders Benjamin Pavard and Lucas Hernandez, were among the biggest stars of the tournament.

"We didn't always control games," Deschamps acknowledged. "But from the start I made the choice of young players. Among the 14 who played their first major competition it goes without saying that they'll be better in two or four years.

"We played an excellent Belgian team [in the semi-final] who caused us a lot of difficulty. Too bad for them. This World Cup was special; I noticed it right from the get-go. It didn't always favour the teams who had the most possession. To quote Guy Stephan [his assistant], I would say our team was precise like a surgeon. It's the truth. We managed to hurt them."

The challenge now for Deschamps and France is maintaining a challenge for Euro 2020 and beyond. Deschamps is fully aware that Italy (2006/2010), Spain (2010/2014) and Germany (2014/2018) have all failed miserably in the World Cups which they defended as champions.

"We'll find out in two years," he admits. "You need to be careful because, in sports, when you win big you can also screw up big. Someone said this to me a while ago. The day after is always difficult. I've experienced it first-hand. It took me six months to find my feet after 1998.

"I'm still here for two years, that's already quite good. We won't have this World Cup taken away from us but there will be another one in four years. My contract ends in 2020 and that's good as is. I'm not worried about my situation. I wasn't worried before the World Cup either."

John Holmesdale

> "France will be on the roof of the world for four years. The memories and emotions remain, but the titles more so because we're competitive athletes"

PREVIOUS WINNERS

WORLD MANAGER OF THE YEAR

1982 *Enzo Bearzot, Italy*
1983 *Sepp Piontek, Denmark*
1984 *Michel Hidalgo, France*
1985 *Terry Venables, Barcelona*
1986 *Guy Thys, Belgium*
1987 *Johan Cruyff, Ajax*
1988 *Rinus Michels, Holland/Leverkusen*
1989 *Arrigo Sacchi, Milan*
1990 *Franz Beckenbauer, West Germany/ Marseille*
1991 *Michel Platini, France*
1992 *Richard Moller-Nielsen, Denmark*
1993 *Alex Ferguson, Manchester United*
1994 *Carlos Alberto Parreira, Brazil*
1995 *Louis Van Gaal, Ajax*
1996 *Berti Vogts, Germany*
1997 *Ottmar Hitzfeld, Borussia Dortmund*
1998 *Arsene Wenger, Arsenal*
1999 *Alex Ferguson, Manchester United*
2000 *Dino Zoff, Italy*
2001 *Gerard Houllier, Liverpool*
2002 *Guus Hiddink, South Korea/PSV*
2003 *Carlo Ancelotti, Milan*
2004 *Jose Mourinho, Porto/Chelsea*
2005 *Jose Mourinho, Chelsea*
2006 *Marcello Lippi, Italy*
2007 *Alex Ferguson, Manchester United*
2008 *Alex Ferguson, Manchester United*
2009 *Pep Guardiola, Barcelona*
2010 *Jose Mourinho, Internazionale/Real Madrid*
2011 *Pep Guardiola, Barcelona*
2012 *Vicente Del Bosque, Spain*
2013 *Jupp Heynckes, Bayern Munich*
2014 *Joachim Low, Germany*
2015 *Luis Enrique, Barcelona*
2016 *Claudio Ranieri, Leicester City*
2017 *Zinedine Zidane, Real Madrid*

WORLD TEAM OF THE YEAR

1982 *Brazil*
1983 *Hamburg*
1984 *France*
1985 *Everton*
1986 *Argentina*
1987 *Porto*
1988 *Holland*
1989 *Milan*
1990 *West Germany*
1991 *France*
1992 *Denmark*
1993 *Parma*
1994 *Milan*
1995 *Ajax*
1996 *Nigeria*
1997 *B Dortmund*
1998 *France*
1999 *Man United*
2000 *France*
2001 *Liverpool*
2002 *Brazil*
2003 *Milan*
2004 *Greece*
2005 *Liverpool*
2006 *Barcelona*
2007 *Iraq*
2008 *Spain*
2009 *Barcelona*
2010 *Spain*
2011 *Barcelona*
2012 *Spain*
2013 *Bayern Munich*
2014 *Germany*
2015 *Barcelona*
2016 *Leicester City*
2017 *Real Madrid*

On top of the world...France celebrate beating Croatia in the 2018 World Cup Final

PLAYER

KYLIAN **MBAPPE**

Teenage World Cup winner

It was quite a year for the kid from Bondy, a banlieue in the Paris suburbs, who only turned 20 in December but has achieved more in the past 18 months than most players manage in their entire careers.

The media spotlight falls on young talent at an increasingly early age, often before they have a chance to fulfill their potential. But in Mbappe's case his talent is clear for all to see and in the summer he became only the second teenager, after Pele, to score in a World Cup Final.

His performances in Russia – notably against Argentina in the round of 16 when he was fouled for the opening goal and then scored twice himself – gave France the momentum to progress with increasing confidence through the knockout stage. In that game against the South Americans he even outshone Lionel Messi and caused all manner of problems for the opposition defence with his blistering pace.

At club level, Mbappe has threatened to overshadow his Paris Saint-Germain team-mate, world-record buy Neymar.

"Kylian is doing some extraordinary things. What he can do at such a young age is not normal," said national coach Didier Deschamps after Mbappe's four goals in PSG's 5-0 thrashing of Lyon in October.

"You can't put him in any category as a player like him only appears occasionally. I'm privileged because he's French and he plays with us."

Final...scoring v Croatia (in blue, far left)

Mbappe's form has prompted speculation that if the French club are forced by Financial Fairplay (FFP) rules to sell one or the other of their two stars it would be Neymar heading for the Parc des Princes exit.

Not that PSG signed Mbappe on the cheap. The teenager had the option of moving from Monaco to Real Madrid in 2017 but the interest of the European champions was used to force up the price paid by PSG to €180million.

Recent "Football Leaks" revelations alleged that during negotiations with PSG, Mbappe and his father Wilfrid demanded a total of €55m after tax – a €5m signing bonus and a €50m salary over the course of a five-year contract.

Further allegations included a demand that the club make a private jet available to him for 50 hours per year, financial compensation in the event of PSG being banned from the Champions League for breaking FFP rules, and for Wilfrid Mbappe to be present during team training sessions.

PSG denied that the requests had been granted and Mbappe himself rejected reports that he demanded a payment of €10m from PSG to compensate him for the taxes he pays, declaring the rumours to be "totally false".

He said: "I want to specify that I pay my own taxes in France, for all my income. For me, the important thing to see was that the club could give me the best chance to continue my progression. It was a natural decision to choose PSG."

John Holmesdale

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"[Brazilian] Ronaldo was a forward, very quick. But Kylian is even quicker"

France coach Didier Deschamps after Mbappe's pace destroyed the Argentina defence in Les Bleus' 4-2 win at the World Cup

GENERAL MANAGER

MICHAEL ZORC

Dortmund's talent spotter supreme

While new Borussia Dortmund coach Lucien Favre and his merry band of turbo-charged stars are showered with praise for their sensational efforts this season – setting the pace in the Bundesliga and qualifying with ease for the last 16 of the Champions League – it's all too easy to overlook the sterling work off the ball by general manager Michael Zorc, the man in charge of personnel strategy at the Ruhr outfit. He is the real power behind the throne.

Make no mistake, there would be no Dortmund resurgence without Zorc's eye for talent, extensive contacts book, flair for hardball negotiations and finger on the pulse of the club's culture.

Dortmund from head to toe, he was an outstanding midfielder with the club for 20 years. A former captain and *Sportdirektor* since 1998, he knows exactly the type of player the fans at the Westfalenstadion demand: brave, committed, honest and attack-minded.

Capped six times by Germany, for Zorc the club's identity is priceless and beyond compromise.

One of the most astute administrators in the European game, the 56-year-old has pulled off many a transfer coup, notably bringing in such raw talent as Tomas Rosicky, Mats Hummels, Robert Lewandowski, Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and Ousmane Dembele. But never before has he assembled a better recruitment class than the one which arrived in the last transfer window in August.

Mastermind... Zorc (above) is the driving force behind this season's Dortmund side (right)

More or less every recent signing has turned out to be a source of substantial added-value. Midfield anchor men in Belgium's Axel Witsel (from Tianjin Quanjian) and Denmark's Thomas Delaney (Borussia Monchengladbach), French centre-back Abdou Diallo (Mainz), Moroccan right-back Achraf Hakimi (on secondment from Real Madrid) and, last but by no means least, free-scoring ex-Valencia and Barcelona striker Paco Alcacer, whose initial loan was quickly made permanent. Former Eintracht Frankfurt right-winger Marius Wolf was also making a positive impact until laid low by an autumnal thigh injury.

An investment of some €75million has reaped a mega dividend; quite possibly, the Bundesliga-winning kind. Most important of all, Zorc has proved that football at the highest level need not necessarily be a big-bucks preserve, that Dortmund can compete with much wealthier rivals at home and abroad.

After the club's financial collapse in the early part of the millennium, Zorc and CEO Hans-Joachim Watzke had to turn to a more sustainable business model, one based on the acquisition and development of prodigies from around the globe. And it's worked a treat too, with such exciting tyros as Christian Pulisic and Jadon Sancho queuing up to join the Dortmund dream factory.

"Our calling card must always be that we are the best club for top talent," says Zorc. When he does eventually retire in a few years, he will not easily be replaced.

Nick Bidwell

IN HIS OWN WORDS

"We don't only talk about developing talents, we give them playing time at a high level. This allows us to develop them here, and that sometimes makes it easier to get a player, especially young players. They know they will get match practice at a high level. That might be the difference to Bayern Munich, the clubs from Manchester, Chelsea, those big Spanish clubs"

PLAYER

FRAN **KIRBY**

Chelsea forward praised for goals, awards and tackling mental health

At 17, Francesca Kirby walked away from football, a sport that had consumed her for 10 years and already brought a debut for Reading. She now knows she was suffering from depression brought on by the grief of her mother's sudden death three years earlier with a brain haemorrhage.

Kirby had been very close to her mother, Denise, who had been the one driving her to matches, standing on the sidelines and washing her kit. Though father Steve took on both roles, changing his shifts as a train driver to become her chauffeur and supporter, amid the many other parenting responsibilities the emotional void was too big to fill.

While Kirby had tried to shut out her grief, her football had progressed – she had been called up by England under-19s and had been offered a scholarship in America – but suddenly she could not see the point of continuing if her mother was not there to share in the success.

"When I lost her I lost a bit of football as well. I would look out and try and find her in the crowd and she wasn't there," Kirby has recalled. "It became a dark stage of my life."

She did not just quit football, at one stage she could barely find the will to drag herself out of bed.

It took the support of her father, and a spell of playing for fun in a Sunday League team with friends, to reawaken Kirby's love for the game. She re-joined Reading and the goals began to flow. Full England honours followed, then a record-breaking transfer to Chelsea.

Today, Fran Kirby is the leading women's footballer in England. In 2018 she became the first Football Writers' Association Women's Footballer of the Year, a landmark award – the men's equivalent is the granddaddy of all individual honours, first awarded to Stanley Matthews in 1948.

Talent...playing for Chelsea and (right) with the Football Writers' award

She was also the Professional Footballers' Association Women's Player of the Year.

Kirby was Chelsea Women's player of the year too, after a season in which her goals led the London club to the double of Women's Super League and Women's FA Cup, and the semi-finals of the UEFA Women's Champions League. She was also instrumental in England qualifying for the 2019 Women's World Cup.

Kirby's influence as a role model is not just about the goals and awards. She has increasingly spoken publicly of her own experiences with depression in an attempt to help others with mental health issues. In 2018 she recorded a moving video, *It's OK not to be OK*, for UEFA's WePlayStrong campaign charting her difficulties and recovery.

Denise Kirby collapsed in front of her daughter during a meeting with Reading academy staff. She passed away overnight. Kirby says: "My mum was the biggest driver in my football career. Before my mum passed away I was a very extroverted person.

"I became very introverted, quiet and anxious about what people thought of me. People wouldn't have liked me as a person, I didn't like me as a person. It took me a long time to find myself, start loving myself and take care of myself again."

Of her openness she adds: "I think the more people read about [mental health] in the media the more they [can] talk about it, to their friends, their family."

Kirby now focuses on recalling her mum in a positive way. "Her memory is a motivational tool for me," she says. "I want to make my family proud." That she has done, and continues to do.

Glenn Moore

IN HER OWN WORDS

"I'm really proud to be a part of the 'Strong Is...' series as part of Together #WePlayStrong. I believe the more people talk about these issues and read about them in the media, the more open they'll become to talking about it with their friends, family or to someone who can help them"

"I've accepted now that it's OK not to be OK. It's the one thing that I would emphasise to anyone – it is OK to be upset and it is OK to need to talk to someone. It's a normal part of life"

PLAYER

BAS **DOST**

Dutch striker who decided grass was not greener away from Sporting

Back in May, after fans of Lisbon giants Sporting had viciously assaulted him and several team-mates at the club's training ground, there seemed little chance of Dutch centre-forward Bas Dost ever playing for the club again.

In the wake of a turbulent season of underachievement at Sporting – finishing outside the Champions League qualifying spots and losing to Atletico Madrid in the quarter-finals of the Europa League – a slew of first-teamers were determined to head for the exit, outraged not only by the violence but also the attitude of ever-belligerent president Bruno De Carvalho, who following the loss to Atletico virulently criticised their commitment to the cause and threatened them with suspension.

Dost, left needing hospital treatment for two wounds to his head, accused an ultra of hitting him repeatedly with a belt, and like many of his colleagues immediately rescinded his contract, citing "just cause" – a legally watertight pretext for a course of action. Most of the discontented crew – including goalkeeper Rui Patricio, midfield enforcer William Carvalho, wingers Gelson Martins and Daniel Podence, and full-back Cristiano Piccini – all duly moved on to pastures new. However, for Dost, breaking up was much harder to do.

Despite Milan, Sevilla, Newcastle United and Wolverhampton Wanderers all showing strong interest, his wantaway instincts eventually cooled and in late July he plumped for the status quo option and signed a new three-year deal with the green-and-white hoops.

Why the change of heart? Basically, the 29-year-old ex-Heerenveen and Wolfsburg striker looked over the border and realised the grass was not greener. He had enjoyed tremendous personal success in his first two seasons in the Portuguese capital, netting 71 goals in all competitions and, apart from a gang of hooded thugs, had the backing of the vast majority of the supporters.

Ups and downs...on target for Sporting and (right) playing with a bandaged head after the attack

On the evening of the attack, hundreds of Sporting aficionados gathered outside the club's Alvalade stadium to present a common front against hooliganism. Pride of place at the demo was a giant poster of Dost and a smattering of Dutch flags.

He would have been equally relieved to see the Trump-like De Carvalho ousted from the presidency. No more in-house sniping or psychological warfare for the dressing room to contend with. Here is a footballer at peace.

One-nil in favour of forgiveness.

Nick Bidwell

IN HIS OWN WORDS

"I spoke with my family and the conclusion was that this was my club. I love Sporting and want to be here"

"I'm proud to represent Sporting and adore living in Portugal. What's not to like about Sporting and Portugal?"

UEFA PRESIDENT

ALEKSANDER **CEFERIN**

Slovene ushers in a new era for Europe

More than almost any other international football leader, Aleksander Ceferin represents a new era. He was not even a member of the UEFA executive committee when the old guard decided, reluctantly, in 2016 that they had no option but to seek a replacement as president for banned Michel Platini.

The Frenchman may still protest innocence over his acceptance of a decade-delayed $2million payment from FIFA, but few people care any longer. He is history. Ceferin is the new man; the chosen preference of Europe's middle-rank and minnow federations who saw in the Slovene a break from the power grid of the western European mainstream.

Considered initially as a preference of the Russian-influenced east European nations and the Nordic countries, any suggestion that he might be their puppet was quickly dispelled when he killed off media claims that the "deal" was to send Euro 2024 to Norway and the rest.

Not that Ceferin quite knew what he was undertaking when he was propelled from comparative public anonymity to the number two role – behind FIFA's Gianni Infantino – in world football politics. And he has quickly discovered that elevated status is the responsibility of leading a federation which generates more than 90 per cent of the wealth of the world game.

One of the strengths of the busy bureaucracy which allowed UEFA to run smoothly for a year without a president at all is that Ceferin's past 12 months in office have allowed him to extend its purview over a wide range of projects.

The 51-year-old has also brought UEFA closer to a number of major international NGOs which affords the organisation ever greater political influence, status and – in case it needs it – protection.

Unopposed...he wll stand for re-election on February 7

Ceferin began 2018 alongside a former president of the European Commission, Jose Manuel Barroso, in addressing a major sports-integrity forum. Later came the PR coup of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Council of Europe. Simultaneously came FIFA business in his role as chairman of the competitions organising committee and then it was back to Nyon to defend staff against death threats for an investigation into Albanian match fixing.

In the modern world of sports politics, the projection of the message is crucial. Infantino has discovered this to his cost over the contentious "secret" deal for a tournaments revamp.

One arena in which Ceferin did appear to follow the Platini line was in his suspicion about a rush to video assistant referees. Hence his expressed concerns that FIFA and Infantino were scampering too far, too fast in implementing VAR at the World Cup finals in Russia. UEFA, intimated Ceferin, was ready to wait and see. Now, case proven, he has smoothly changed gear and VAR will be running in the Champions League knockout stage this season – with more to come.

The next question is when – rather than whether – Ceferin will leave the Platini era even further behind by declaring goal-line assistants redundant.

The last few months of the year saw no let-up for Ceferin. The Nations League was launched with such surprising success that FIFA wants to copy the concept, while common sense returned to the European Championship with the award by Ceferin's executive committee of the 2024 finals to Germany.

This time next year, however, he will be judged not by 2018 but by his response to the plethora of major challenges which lie ahead.

UEFA's financial fairplay system has been brought into disrepute by the "Football Leaks" revelations about Paris Saint-Germain and Manchester City; the security of UEFA's TV income has been challenged by Saudi Arabia-based pirates; FAs will expect to see UEFA step up its pursuit of the 2030 World Cup finals; and Europe will demand a heavy financial price for accepting FIFA's $25billion competitions land grab.

One factor is for certain: Ceferin is going nowhere as he stands unopposed for re-election at UEFA Congress in Rome on February 7. He will be around for a long time to come.

Keir Radnedge

IN HIS OWN WORDS

"Football is not for sale. I cannot accept that some people, some of our colleagues who are blinded by the pursuit of profit, are considering to sell the soul of football tournaments to nebulous private funds. We are not the owners of football. We are not allowed to sell it"

Without naming Gianni Infantino, Ceferin criticised the secretive plans for an expanded Club World Cup, funded by Saudi Arabia, and denounced "a highly cynical and ruthless mercantilism"

OBITUARIES

VICHAI SRIVADDHANAPRABHA

Thai businessman and Leicester City owner, aged 60

The Thai billionaire who transformed the fortunes of Leicester City, winning a remarkable against-the-odds Premier League title in 2016, was one of five people killed in a helicopter crash after the club's home game against West Ham United.

Srivaddhanaprabha, known simply as Vichai, made his fortune after building a company, the King Power Group, from humble beginnings into Thailand's largest duty-free shopping business. He bought Leicester from Milan Mandaric in 2010 for £39million, becoming chairman a year later, with his interest in the club reportedly sparked after attending their League Cup triumph at Wembley in 1997.

He invested heavily in what was then a Championship club to win promotion in 2014, winning the Premier League as 5,000-1 outsiders two years later.

Claudio Ranieri, the manager of the title-winning side, said: "When people refer to Leicester winning the Premier League title in 2016 as a fairy tale, it is the desire, commitment and vision of Vichai and his family which made that fairy tale possible.

"They won many friends along the way of this incredible journey."

Vichai – whose son, Aiyawatt, is expected to take over as chairman – was known for his generosity, providing free drinks and food for fans on his 60th birthday. After his death it emerged that he had donated £2m to a local children's hospital, as well as other local causes.

Thousands of flowers and scarves were left in tribute to Vichai at Leicester's King Power Stadium by fans who sang: "Champions of England, you made us sing that." WS

John Holmesdale

Respect...floral tributes outside the club's ground

Grateful...not only did Vichai Srivaddhanaprabha enable Leicester City to win the Premier League, he also backed local charities

Rene Houseman
Argentinian World Cup winner in 1978, aged 64.

Davide Astori
Fiorentina captain and Italy international defender, aged 31.

Ray Wilkins
Former Chelsea, Manchester United and Milan midfielder, capped 84 times by England, aged 61.

Cyrille Regis
Former England striker, aged 59.

Tommy Lawrence
Former Liverpool goalkeeper, aged 77.

Jimmy Armfield
1966 World Cup winner, aged 82.

Azeglio Vicini
Italy boss at the 1990 World Cup, aged 84.

Liam Miller
Former Celtic, Manchester United and Republic of Ireland midfielder, aged 36.

Roy Bentley
Last surviving member of England's 1950 World Cup squad, aged 93.

Neale Cooper
Former Aberdeen midfielder, aged 54.

Henri Michel
Former France, Cameroon and Ivory Coast coach, aged 70.

Ray Wilson
1966 World Cup winner, aged 83.

Alan Gilzean
Former Dundee, Tottenham Hotspur and Scotland forward, aged 79.

Paul Madeley
Former Leeds United player, aged 73.

Roger Piantoni
Prolific French striker in the 1950s with Reims, aged 85.

Jimmy McIlroy
Former Northern Ireland forward, aged 86.

Kevin Beattie
Former Ipswich Town and England defender, aged 64.

Jim Brogan
Former Celtic left-back and 1970 European Cup runner-up, aged 74.

Doug Ellis
Former Aston Villa chairman, aged 94.

The BIG stories of 2019

...before they happen

Spotlight on some of the key questions facing football in the coming months

Back...Ajax are in the Champions League knockout stage once again

1 WILL MAN CITY BE PUNISHED FOR FFP VIOLATIONS?

One of the revelations from the Football Leaks investigation was the allegation that Manchester City had misled UEFA regarding the true extent of their Abu Dhabi owners' financial input. As a result, City could face sanctions for breaching Financial Fairplay regulations.

Possible punishments include being banned from the Champions League, but such a move is likely to provoke a furious response from their wealthy masters, whose funds to mount a legal challenge appear to be limitless.

It remains to be seen whether UEFA has the stomach for a major legal battle – especially when Gianni Infantino has a proposal for a lucrative alternative competition in the form of an expanded Club World Cup.

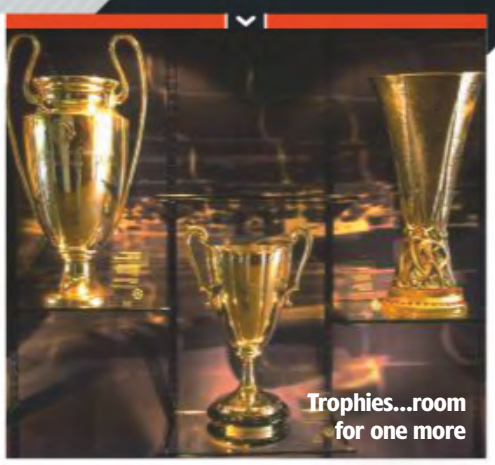
FFP...Manchester City could face sanctions

2 WILL LIONEL MESSI PLAY AT THE COPA AMERICA?

The Barcelona star has not appeared for Argentina since last summer's World Cup, and new national coach Lionel Scaloni has declined to say whether Messi will return to his squad for the Copa America, which will be played in Brazil between June 14 and July 7.

"I've not spoken with him about whether he's coming to the Copa America," Scaloni said before Argentina's November friendly against Mexico.

The draw for the South American tournament is set to take place on January 24 in Rio de Janeiro.


Trophies...room for one more

4 DO WE NEED A THIRD UEFA CLUB COMPETITION?

UEFA is expected to announce more details of its new third club competition, which is set to start in 2021. Under the working title of "Europa League 2", the new tournament will feature 32 teams, with games taking place on Thursday evenings, as with the existing Europa League.

As a result, the Europa League will be reduced to 32 teams, with only clubs from Europe's 15 top-ranked nations taking part in UEFA's second competition. Sides from countries with lower co-efficients will enter the new tournament.

A new feature of both the existing Europa League and its new sister competition will see an extra play-off round between the group stage and knockout phase, with teams ranked second in their Europa League 2 groups and the third-ranked teams of the Europa League groups facing off. The winner of the play-off would then progress to the last 16 of the new tournament.

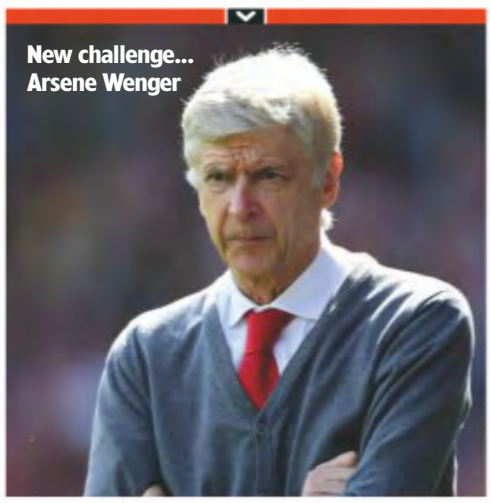
UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin said: "The new UEFA club competition makes UEFA's club competitions more inclusive than ever before. There will be more matches for more clubs, with more associations represented in the group stages. This competition was borne out of ongoing dialogue with clubs."

Return... Lionel Messi

3 HOW WILL AJAX FARE IN THE CHAMPIONS LEAGUE LAST 16 FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 13 YEARS?

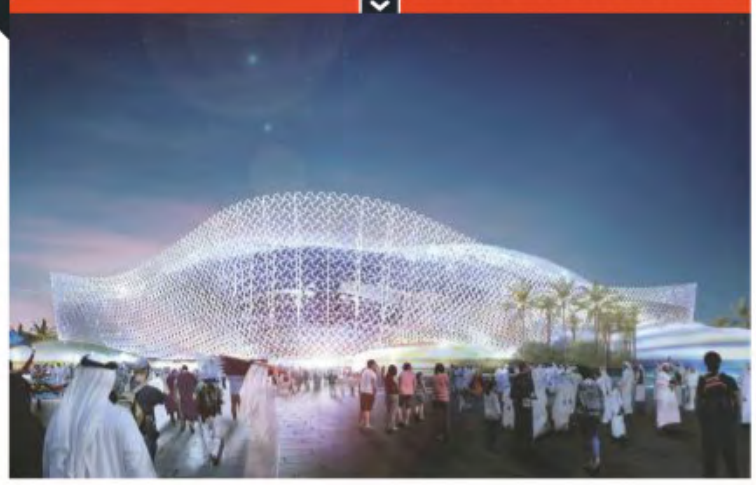
A 2-0 win in Athens over Greek champions AEK was marred by violence from home fans, who threw a petrol bomb at visiting supporters. But the scoreline also confirmed Ajax's place in the Champions League knockout stage for the first time since 2006, when they lost to Internazionale in the round of 16.

The spring campaign could prove to be a last hurrah for Ajax's exciting youngsters Matthijs De Ligt and Frenkie De Jong, who are both being courted by the likes of PSG, Manchester City and Barcelona.


New challenge... Arsene Wenger

5 WILL ANY CLUB APPOINT ARSENE WENGER?

The former Arsenal manager has maintained a low profile since leaving London last summer. But that has not stopped speculation linking him with high-profile jobs at Real Madrid and Bayern Munich, while the 69-year-old Frenchman was said to be Fulham's first choice to replace Slavisa Jokanovic.



Host venue...Al Rayyan Stadium

6 WILL PRESSURE GROW TO EXPAND QATAR 2022 TO 48 TEAMS?

For the past six months, FIFA president Gianni Infantino has been quietly pushing the possibility of an expanded World Cup in 2022, four years before a 48-team tournament is held in USA, Canada and Mexico.

Qatar is planning to build eight stadiums, but that would not be enough to accommodate a bigger finals – and nor do they have the hotel infrastructure to cope with extra visitors.

Any expansion would have to involve other Middle Eastern countries, but Qatar is involved in a bitter dispute with neighbours Saudi Arabia and is currently subject to a trade blockade.

The political dimension is that the 2022 finals could be billed as the Middle Eastern World Cup. Infantino recently addressed the theme in a speech to G20 leaders, saying: "Football can bring us together and make the world a more prosperous, educated, equal and, perhaps even, peaceful place."

What price Infantino doing what his predecessor Sepp Blatter tried desperately but failed to achieve by winning the Nobel peace prize?

Safe bet...Gianni Infantino

7 WILL GIANNI INFANTINO BE RE-ELECTED UNOPPOSED?

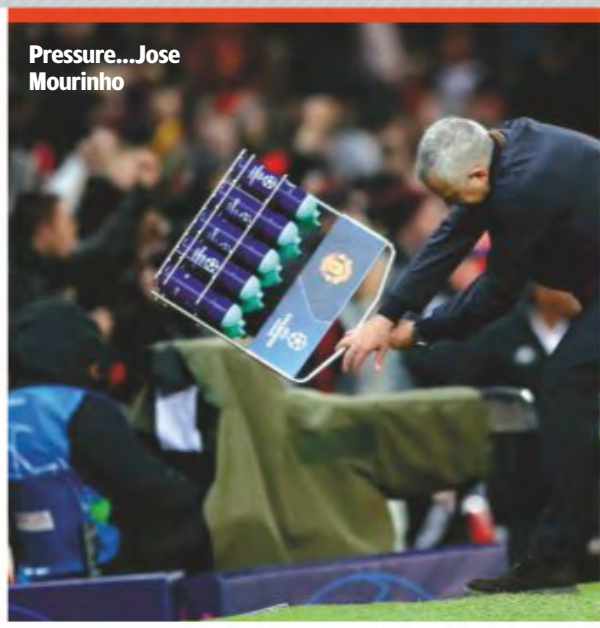
The Swiss-Italian lawyer faces re-election as FIFA president in June 2019. Despite facing criticism for continuing where Sepp Blatter left off by, for example, limiting the powers of FIFA's ethics committee (so that it did not investigate him), he is likely to be re-elected unopposed.

His extravagant financial commitments to FIFA's non-European members are likely to deter any potential challengers.

8 ARE INTERNAZIONALE TOO DEPENDANT ON MAURO ICARDI?

The Argentinian striker was voted Serie A footballer of the season for 2018, the first non-Juventus player to receive the award since Zlatan Ibrahimovic in 2011.

The joint top-scorer in last season's Serie A with Ciro Immobile, he has continued his rich form into 2018-19 with a string of key goals for Internazionale, but the club face growing criticism that they rely too much on him and that their challenge in the spring could falter if he suffers a serious injury.



Pressure...Jose Mourinho

Serie A's best... Mauro Icardi

9 IS JOSE MOURINHO IN TERMINAL DECLINE?

Manchester United were set to enter the new year significantly behind the Premier League's top five of Manchester City, Liverpool, Chelsea, Arsenal and Tottenham Hotspur, with manager Jose Mourinho complaining that their rivals have outspent United. But the facts do not stand up to scrutiny.

United's functional playing style under Mourinho, his criticism of players and the poor form of expensive signings all suggest that another trophyless season will surely see an end to his residency in Manchester.

On the up ...Borussia Dortmund

10 WHO'S RESPONSIBLE FOR DORTMUND'S REVIVAL?

Borussia Dortmund were favourites to go into the new year as the Bundesliga's winter champions after a string of impressive performances. It had been a stark contrast to the previous season, when Dutch coach Peter Bosz was fired in December 2017 following a run of poor results.

Young guns Jadon Sancho, Christian Pulisic and Jacob Bruun Larsen have brought a new flair to Dortmund, but coach Lucien Favre has also overseen a thorough transformation of the side.

Spanish striker Paco Alcacer has been a revelation up front, while new signings Axel Witsel, Thomas Delaney and Achraf Hakimi have all quickly acclimatised to life at the Westfalenstadion.

11 HOW WILL GREGG BERHALTER FARE AS USA COACH?

The former USA defender was appointed as national coach after a long selection process and replaced interim boss Dave Sarachan – the former assistant to Bruce Arena, who stepped down after the US failure to qualify for the 2018 World Cup.

Berhalter spent five years in charge of Columbus Crew where he earned a reputation for blooding youngsters and he will be expected to do the same in his new role, with new faces introduced at the CONCACAF Gold Cup, which will be played in the USA from June 15 to July 7.

New faces...Gregg Berhalter

Under threat... Niko Kovac

12 CAN NIKO KOVAC LAST THE SEASON IN CHARGE AT BAYERN MUNICH?

The Croatian, who arrived from Eintracht Frankfurt last summer, has been under extreme pressure following a string of poor results, including a 3-2 defeat to Bundesliga leaders Borussia Dortmund, a result which opened up a seven-point gap between the two teams.

History suggests that the Bayern hierarchy may wait for a complete summer overhaul in the transfer market rather than making January acquisitions. It remains to be seen whether Kovac will be sacrificed and an interim coach brought in until a big-name replacement arrives.

13 WHO WILL HOST THE 2019 AFRICAN NATIONS CUP?

In early December, CAF stripped host Cameroon of its right to stage the 2019 finals, due to be held from June 15 to July 13, following delays in preparations and concerns over security.

CAF had taken the decision in July to add an extra eight teams to the tournament, which immediately raised questions about Cameroon's ability to hold an expanded 24-team competition. But when CAF president Ahmad went to Cameroon in October he told the country's state president, Paul Biya: "CAF has no Plan B, nor have we ever considered taking the Nations Cup away from Cameroon."

Morocco, who refused to host the 2015 finals because of concerns about an outbreak of the ebola virus, had been tipped to step in as emergency hosts, but they declined to do so. South Africa and Egypt are now the likely candidates to fill the role.

Powerful...Susanna Dinnage

14 HOW WILL THE PREMIER LEAGUE'S NEW CEO FARE?

Susanna Dinnage will overnight become one of the most powerful women in football when she succeeds Richard Scudamore as chief executive of the Premier League in January.

Dinnage is an experienced TV executive, having spent more than a decade in senior positions at Discovery, including time at Eurosport.

Her negotiating skills will be needed to maintain Scudamore's achievement in obtaining record levels of revenue from TV deals.

In the short term, diplomatic skills will be more of a priority as the Premier League seeks to smooth over the furore over Scudamore's £5million "golden handcuffs" deal.

Holders...Cameroon won the African Nations Cup in 2017

Surplus...Isco

16 WHAT FUTURE FOR ISCO AT REAL MADRID?

The midfielder lauded by former Real coach Zinedine Zidane has endured a tough time under Madrid's new boss Santiago Solari, who left the Spain playmaker out of his first seven starting selections.

There have been suggestions that Isco's support for previous coach Julen Lopetegui may have counted against him with the new regime, though Solari insisted that "I'm satisfied with him" after an effective second-half substitute appearance against Valencia in early December.

Isco's release clause – a reported €700million – will likely deter any potential suitors. But that will not stop transfer speculation around one of La Liga's best players in 2019.

Abroad...Milan and Juventus contested the 2017 Italian Super Cup in Qatar

15 WILL ITALY'S SUPER CUP IN SAUDI ARABIA GO AHEAD?

The Italian Super Cup is scheduled to be played between Juventus and Milan on January 16 at the King Abdullah Sports City stadium in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

However, there have been calls for the game to be moved away from Saudi Arabia in response to the global outcry at the murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

While the game is scheduled to be broadcast by Italian TV station RAI, the journalists' union at the state broadcaster described the plan to play in Saudi Arabia as "absurd" and "inacceptable".

Success...VAR

17 HOW WILL VAR IMPACT ON THE CHAMPIONS LEAGUE AND PREMIER LEAGUE?

The use of VAR at last summer's World Cup was a novelty for everybody involved, but it was also widely considered to be a success. So few complaints were raised when UEFA announced in early December that the system, planned for the 2019-20 Champions League, will be fast-tracked into the knockout stage of this season's competition.

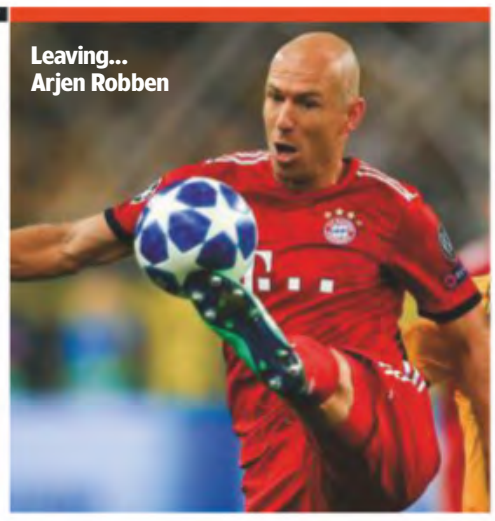
UEFA's decision followed the widely expected move by the Premier League to introduce VAR for the 2019-20 season.

18 WHERE NEXT FOR ARJEN ROBBEN?

The 34-year-old Dutch winger has announced that this season will be his final campaign with Bayern Munich but that he is not yet ready to retire.

"I can say that this is my last year and it is good like that," said Robben. "The club moves on and I may move on. It is the end of a very good and long period.

"I won't stop completely yet."


Leaving... Arjen Robben

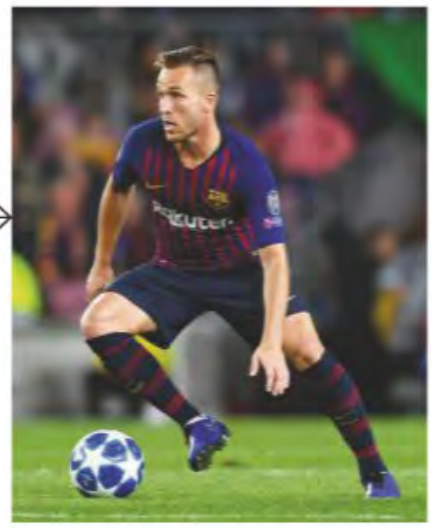
6 of the best

Champions League group stage stars

Nick Bidwell on those who impressed in the early rounds

1 ARTHUR

BARCELONA



Outstanding in the 4-2 triumph away to Tottenham Hotspur and the 2-0 home win over Internazionale, the €31 million summer signing from Gremio is seen by many as the spiritual heir to Barca's former playmaking maestro Xavi.

The 22-year-old diminutive Brazil midfielder is a metronomic passer of the ball and has double-helpings of awareness and imagination. Not too proud to put in the defensive hard yards either, he simply loves the responsibility of driving the team forward.

Club and country colleague Philippe Coutinho calls him "the motor of the side" which is high praise indeed for one still exploring the lay of the land in Europe.

It is incredible to recall that less than two years ago he was not even sure of a first-team spot in Brazilian club football.

2 Milan PAVKOV

RED STAR BELGRADE

The rangy Red Star striker is never going to forget the November night when his stunning seven-minute brace – a bullet header and a right-footed, long-range piledriver – put Liverpool to the sword.

Premium reputations are forged by such exploits and suddenly the 24-year-old is hot property, surely destined to imminently cash in with a big-money move to the European mainstream, with his agent having suggesting Milan are interested.

However, he has not always been a Red Star hero. His first six months at the Marakana following a €300,000 switch from Radnicki Nis in January 2017 were a disaster. He suffered injury problems and was unable to make first-team headway, playing just six minutes as a substitute. It was an embarrassing saga for Red Star who, much to the delight of rivals, had to pay Radnicki a €50,000 bonus for his one fleeting elite run-out.

Red Star's response was to loan him back to Radnicki, where 23 top-flight goals provided the fuel for a third-place finish last season.

3 Hector HERRERA
PORTO

After undergoing cosmetic surgery on his nose and ears a few months ago, the Mexican international midfielder and Porto skipper is barely recognisable these days. But little has changed with regard to his play, character or leadership ability.

The 28-year-old remains the beating heart of a side that ran out winners of their group. However, this is likely to be his last season with the club as contract renewal talks have repeatedly floundered and the smart money is on him leaving for free in July. And there will be no shortage of takers, with the list of admirers rumoured to include Roma, Internazionale, Juventus, Arsenal and Tottenham Hotspur.

A veteran of half a dozen Champions League campaigns with Porto, he has only once made it to the quarter-finals, losing to Bayern Munich in 2015.

4 Noussair MAZRAOUI
AJAX

In his first season as an established starter for the Amsterdammers, the 21-year-old homegrown right-back has risen to the occasion in Europe, scoring the equaliser in a 1-1 draw at Bayern Munich and a late, late winner at home to Benfica.

A typical Ajax academy graduate, he is self-assured, over-endowed technically and a quick-witted reader of the game. Coming through the ranks he mainly occupied a midfield role and impressed for the first-team last term as a left-sided wing-back and central defender.

The Dutch-born son of Moroccan parents, he was in talks with *Oranje* coach Ronald Koeman earlier this season before opting for the North Africans and making his competitive debut, against Malawi, in September.

5 Maxwel CORNET
LYON

Anyone who saw the Ivorian winger's contribution as his side claimed four points out of six in their group-phase encounters with Manchester City – scoring three goals and embarrassing the Sky Blue back-line with his blistering speed – will find it extremely hard to believe that the 22-year-old is only a spare-part attacker at the Groupama Stadium.

Signed from Metz four years ago, he has hardly featured in Ligue 1 this term and his performances against Pep Guardiola's side even seemed to come as a surprise to the club's loquacious president Jean-Michel Aulas, who said: "Bravo to Maxwel... he has come back from I don't know where."

He almost quit Lyon in the summer, with Aulas reported to be demanding at least €20million, plus a 30 per cent resale windfall.

Any sale price is likely to be even higher now.

6 ALLAN
NAPOLI

"A giant from first minute to last" said Italian sports daily *Corriere dello Sport* of his part in the 1-0 win at home to Liverpool in October and an in-joke at the San Paolo stadium makes reference to his hyperactivity, with fans claiming: "Seventy per cent of Earth is covered by water, the rest by Allan."

With Udinese for three seasons prior to joining Napoli in the summer of 2015, he used to be one of those players who constantly flew under the media radar. But it's a decidedly different story these days.

He recently won his first cap for Brazil in a friendly victory over Uruguay in London, after which his country's assistant-coach Sylvinho said: "He has wheels on his feet."

Glenn Moore

Change is in the air

World Cup draw opens up exciting possibilities

Euro 2017...Scotland keeper Gemma Fay and team-mates try to keep out England

Paris in mid-December was a surreal experience. Across the city there were armoured cars, barricades and Molotov cocktails, but on the Ile Seguin the only *gilets jaunes* on show were video pictures of the yellow-shirted women's football teams of Brazil and Sweden, Jamaica and South Africa.

Outside on the streets, the yellow-vest movement sought to force political revolution; inside La Seine Musicale there were thoughts of more peaceful evolution as the draw for the 2019 Women's World Cup unfolded.

The prospect of a new force in the women's game was raised at Euro 2017 when previously dominant Germany were beaten by Denmark and replaced by Holland. But in north America, Africa and Asia the old regimes remained entrenched, with the United States, Nigeria and Japan retaining regional championships.

The summer should reveal whether Holland's triumph was a one-off or the harbinger of the old order's unseating, with defending champions USA facing plenty of challengers for their crown.

The draw...at La Seine Musicale, Paris

> "It's not about defending the World Cup; it's about attacking the World Cup"
>
> USA coach Jill Ellis

Hosts France are ranked three in the world but have a reputation for cracking under pressure. Fourth-ranked England were semi-finalists at World Cup 2015 and Euro 2017. Holland are now proven winners. Canada have been knocking on the door. Australia and Spain are improving. Sweden were Olympic silver medallists to Germany in 2016 and have experience. Brazil's golden generation are showing signs of grey, but may have a last hurrah in them.

The game's nobility, however, will not go quietly. USA, Germany and Japan have won six of the seven Women's World Cups between them – Norway, in 1995, being the only exception– and all three are strong contenders once again.

The US have outsiders Thailand and newcomers Chile in their group before they face Sweden, by which stage both should have qualified. Winning the group is likely to mean a quarter-final against a French team who were given a tricky but negotiable quartet.

"I like having Sweden as the third game, it allows us to settle into the tournament," says USA coach Jill Ellis. "We're going to be battle-tested going into this World Cup with the schedule we've planned. It's not about defending the World Cup; it's about attacking the World Cup."

Nigeria are the wildcard in France's group. There is talent in the squad but it is starved of matches and resources. If their Swedish coach Thomas Dennerby is given time with the players and a warm-up programme they could surprise. Norway, as things stand, will be without Ballon d'Or winner Ada Hegerberg, who is currently estranged from the set-up. South Korea make up the four but are no makeweights.

Runners-up in 2015, Japan are paired with the team they beat in the semi-finals, England who – having lost vice-captain Jordan Nobbs with ruptured knee ligaments – must first deal with Scotland, who they beat 6-0 at Euro 2017. "We've got to forget what happened at the last Euros," says Scotland manager Shelley Kerr. "It's going to be tough but exciting. We do not fear anyone."

"This, for the whole of the UK, is a fantastic fixture," says England boss Phil Neville. "One to capture the imagination of that girl at school who is thinking, 'on June 9 I'm going to tune in to watch this game and after the game go out on the field and start playing football'.

"That's what this game can do; it can

WORLD CUP 2019

GROUP A
France, Norway, South Korea, Nigeria
GROUP B
Germany, Spain, China, South Africa
GROUP C
Australia, Brazil, Italy, Jamaica
GROUP D
England, Japan, Scotland, Argentina
GROUP E
Canada, Holland, New Zealand, Cameroon
GROUP F
United States, Sweden, Thailand, Chile
(teams listed in order of seeding)

Rematch...France's Marie-Laure Delie (left) and Nora Holstad Berge of Norway will meet again in Group A

inspire the next generation of footballers. It's about winning and losing, but we're here to inspire as well."

Germany ought to win Group B, but have stuttered recently and are under new management. Holland and Canada should contest Group E, but Australia and Brazil need to beware Italy in Group C.

The top two in each group and the four best third-placed countries go through to the knockout stage.

The tournament opens in Paris with France v South Korea on June 7 and closes in Lyon on July 7. Already 200,000 tickets have been sold and FIFA has doubled the prize money – although, as FIFPro noted, the increase from $15million to $30m "actually signifies an increase in the gap between men's and women's prize money. This regressive trend appears to contravene FIFA's statutory commitment to gender equality."

Come June, the hope is that the schoolgirl Neville spoke of being inspired is one of many around the world. WS

Round-up

Winners...Nigeria

Pink arch...England women's team at Wembley

ANOTHER NIGERIAN SUCCESS

Goalkeeper Tochukwu Oluehi was Nigeria's hero as they won their 11th Women's African Nations Cup title.

The defending champions lost their opening match 1-0 to South Africa but progressed to meet *Banyana Banyana* once again in the Final.

Nigeria's Asisat Oshoala missed a penalty as the game ended goalless, and her team-mate Onome Ebi then hit the post with the first kick of the shoot-out. However, South Africa's Lebohang Ramalepe missed to level the scores, and at 4-3, with Linda Motlhalo needing to score to force sudden death, Oluehi saved to give Nigeria victory.

AFGHAN ABUSE INQUIRIES

A series of inquiries are underway by FIFA, the Asian Football Confederation, and the Afghanistan government after *The Guardian* newspaper revealed allegations of sexual abuse against members of the Afghan women's national team.

It is claimed that Keramuddin Keram, president of the Afghanistan Football Federation (AFF) since 2004, had raped and sexually assaulted players in a bedroom in his office – the door to which could only be opened by his fingerprint recognition – and that other officials had coerced players at a training camp into sex.

Other allegations made by former players and coaches include claims of physical assault and death threats. The AFF called the allegations "groundless", but the attorney-general's office ordered six officials, including Keram, to be suspended during the investigation.

"Even if mere allegations cause our people to stop sending their sons and daughters to sports, we need to act immediately and comprehensively," said Afghanistan's president, Ashraf Ghani.

ENGLAND TO HOST EURO 2021

Wembley Stadium will stage the Final of the Women's European Championship in 2021 after England won the right to host the 16-team tournament.

The other proposed venues are Brighton, Brentford's new Lionel Road ground, Manchester City's Academy Stadium, Milton Keynes, Nottingham Forest, Rotherham United, Sheffield United and Southampton.

England last hosted in 2005, when they were knocked out in the group stage. The tournament then was confined to the north-west of the country, with the Final at Blackburn Rovers' Ewood Park.

NEW ZEALAND DOMINATE

The White Ferns' dominance of Oceania since Australia left for the Asian federation was underlined as they romped to success in the OFC Nations Cup, also claiming spots in the 2019 World Cup and 2020 Olympics.

New Zealand scored 43 goals without reply in their five matches in New Caledonia, defeating hosts Fiji 8-0 in the Final. Betsy Hassett was named player of the tournament.

Top...Betsy Hassett

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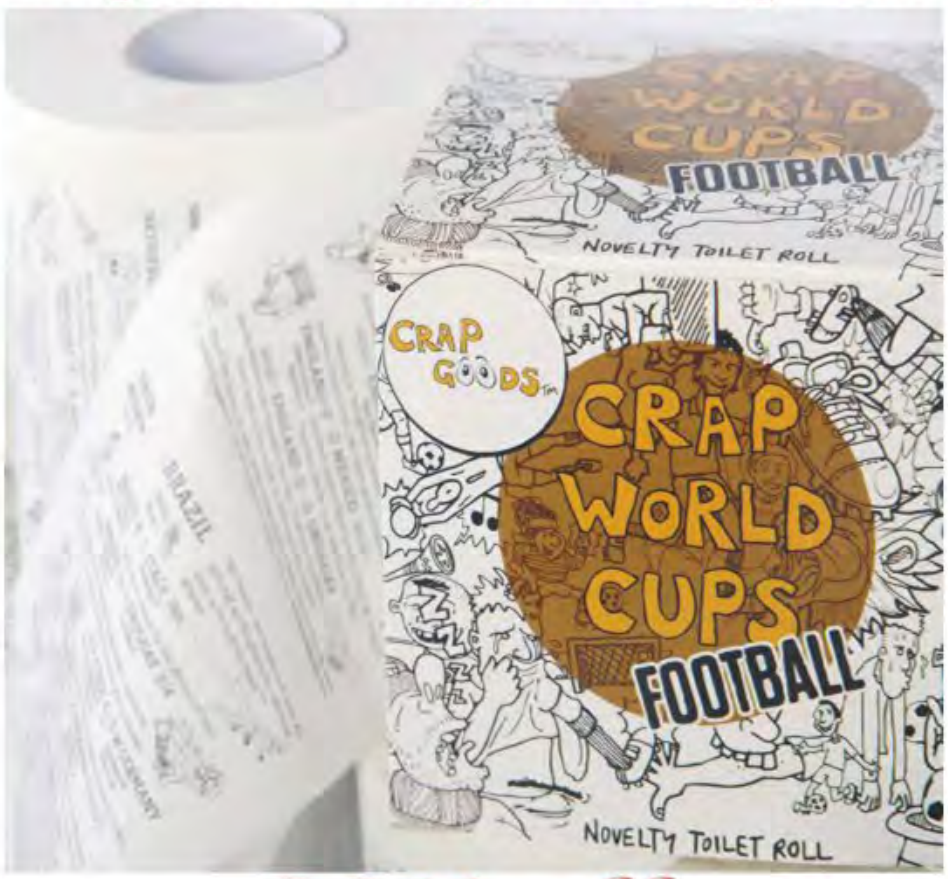

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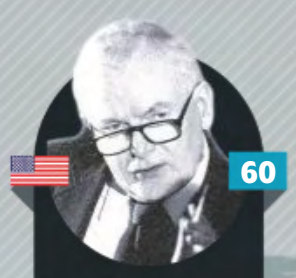

60

PAUL GARDNER
USA

54

JOHN DUERDEN
Asian Cup

70

CAMERON WILSON
China

TIM VICKERY
Brazil

58

STEVE MENARY
Montserrat

69

MIKE PLASTOW
Japan

72

PLUS

60

MLS winner...Atlanta's Leandro Gonzalez Pirez (left)

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Success...Kawasaki Frontale lift the J.League trophy

Asian Cup

JOHN DUERDEN

New teams add to the mix

Plenty of variety in the new 24-team format

The 2019 Asian Cup kicks off on January 5 in Abu Dhabi without the continent's two biggest stars. But while Son Heung-min will join South Korea for their third group game, the talented Omar Abdulrahman of hosts United Arab Emirates misses the whole tournament through injury.

But although their absence may take away a little of the glitz, there is still plenty of variety.

The expansion of the competition from 16 to 24 countries has eased the way in for debutants Yemen, Philippines and Kyrgyzstan. And with teams such as Syria, Palestine and India also in the mix, there are going to be plenty of narratives.

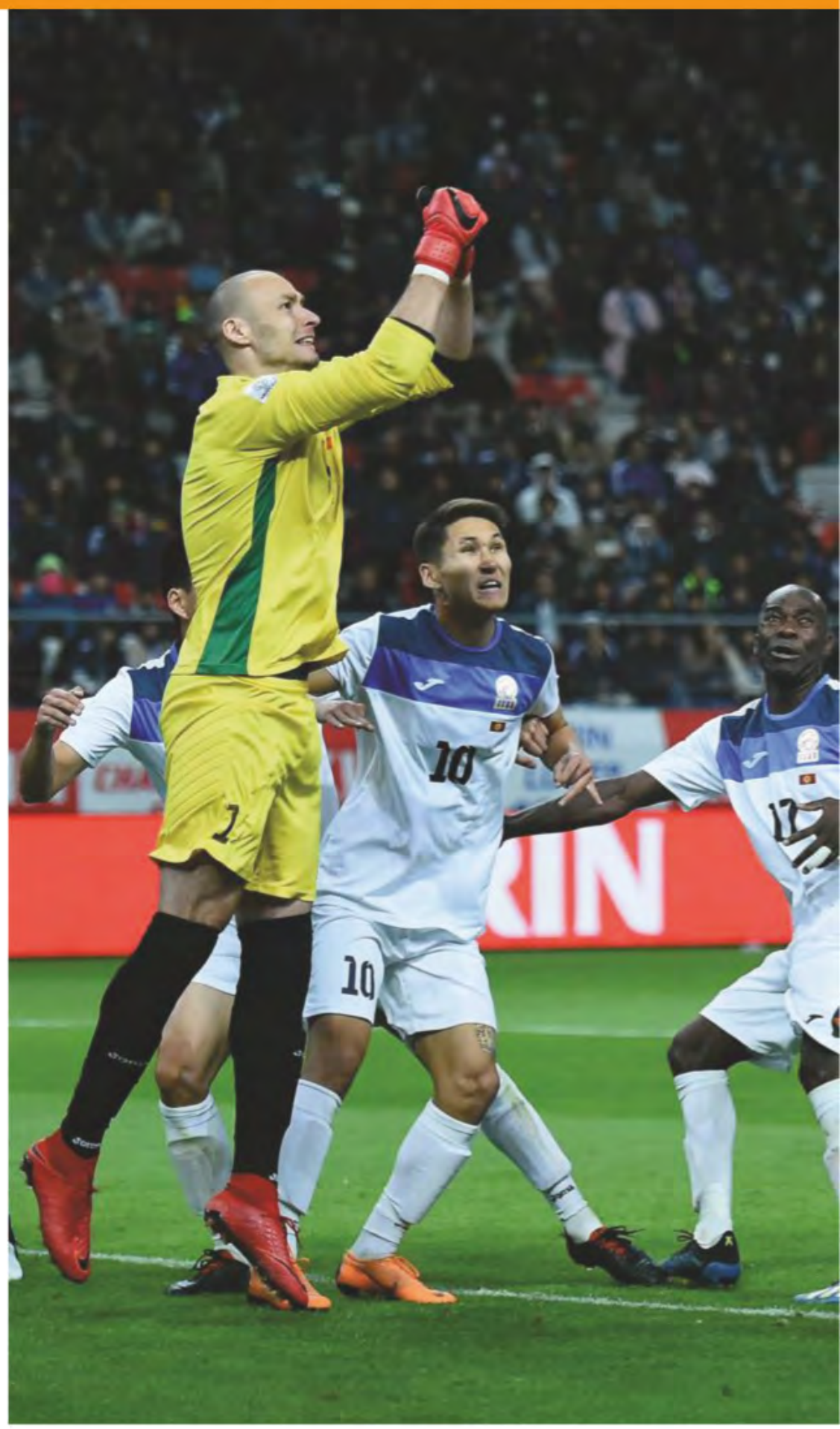
All have what it takes to reach the second round, given that just eight teams will fail to progress from the group stage, but the usual suspects are likely to be around as the February 1 Final draws closer.

Australia are champions, having beaten South Korea 2-1 in Sydney in 2015, but they must face up to life without Tim Cahill, while coach Graham Arnold is back for a second spell in charge after failing at the 2007 competition – the last time there was a surprise winner, with Iraq taking the title.

Japan – who were Asia's best performers at the 2018 World Cup as they exited at the second round after a thrilling Belgium clash – have won four of the past seven editions of the Asian Cup. New coach Hajime Moriyasu is without the retired Keisuke Honda, who is now a Melbourne Victory player and part-time Cambodia coach, but there is plenty of other talent and experience. South Korea have been in good form under their new Portuguese boss Paulo Bento and the team, guilty in the past of not always giving Asia their full attention, have a genuine desire to take the trophy for the first time since 1960.

Iran, with Carlos Queiroz still in charge, may well be the favourites after an impressive World Cup performance and now playing in their own backyard with plenty of expats there to cheer them on. Qatar caused a few people to sit up and take note with the recent win against Switzerland and draw with Iceland.

Of the best of the rest, the UAE, finalists in 1996 when they last hosted the tournament, should be contenders,



Spirited...Palestine are hard to beat

High hopes...Maya Yoshida of Japan dominates in a friendly against Kyrgyzstan

although fans in the cities of Dubai, Sharjah, Abu Dhabi and Al Ain, will miss their playmaker Abdulrahman. Under coach Alberto Zaccheroni, results have been mediocre and goals scarce.

Other big-name bosses include Marcello Lippi, who is hoping to delay his final game as China boss until February, and Sven Goran Eriksson with the Philippines. Hector Cuper has been hired by Central Asia's best, Uzbekistan, who are always contenders but often flatter to deceive.

So, while an expanded tournament taking place so soon after the World Cup may take time to get going, there should be enough variety, unpredictability and new faces to capture the attention. WS

THE TEAMS

GROUP A

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
Just nine goals in 16 games under Alberto Zaccheroni put the Italian coach close to the sack and lowered expectations. Injury to key playmaker Omar Abdulrahman has only added to the feeling that repeating the Final appearance of 1996 – the last time the tournament was held on UAE soil – would be a major surprise.
Key Player Ali Mabkhout

THAILAND
South-east Asia's top team have become more defensively organised under their Serbian boss Milovan Rajevac; a bit too much according to some critics. There is still creativity though, with top players performing well in Japan and an increasing strength in depth. They should be good enough for a last-16 spot.
Key Player Chanathip Songkrasin

INDIA
Finished top of their group in qualifying and approach the tournament full of confidence. Results in preparation under English coach Stephen Constantine have been encouraging and there is a real hope of surviving the group stage. Much depends on attacker Sunil Chhetri, but the defence has improved.
Key Player Sunil Chhetri.

BAHRAIN
The tiny island has faded as a force since the previous decade and qualified through one of the easier groups, which contained Taiwan, Singapore and Turkmenistan. Well organised under experienced Czech coach Miroslav Soukup, they can be frustrating opponents but don't have the quality to go too far.
Key Player Sayed Saeed

GROUP B

AUSTRALIA
After a disappointing World Cup, the defending Asian champions said goodbye to coach Bert Van Marwijk and record goalscorer Tim Cahill. New boss Graham Arnold is in need of a prolific striker and will have to cope without midfielder Aaron Mooy, who has a knee injury.
Key Player Mat Ryan

SYRIA
Preparations are tough at home, but with most players overseas Bernd Stange's side will be a tricky opponent with forwards such as Omar Al Soma. Have never reached the knockout stage but that should change this time.
Key Player Omar Khribin

PALESTINE
With a reasonably young squad, coach Noureddine Ould Ali has a team that is spirited, hard to beat and not short of talent. Enjoyed their debut in Australia four years ago and there is determination to go one better this time. A recent 1-1 draw in China bodes well.
Key Player Abdelatif Bahdari

JORDAN
Usually more pragmatic than pretty – and that has served them well with two quarter-finals in the last three tournaments. Dutch coach Vital Borkelmans is looking for a more expansive game; and while a recent narrow 2-1 loss to Croatia encouraged, a lack of attacking quality will cost.
Key Player Amer Shafi

GROUP C

SOUTH KOREA
The Taeguk Warriors have been in excellent form since Paulo Bento took over as coach in August. Will be without Son Heung-min for the first two games and there are some injuries, but after losing the Final four years ago they won't be far away from a first title since 1960.
Key Player Son Heung-min

CHINA
Fans are unhappy with the team's form and home draws with India and Palestine have deepened the gloom. The money spent on coach Marcello Lippi, who will retire after the tournament, has been questioned and hopes of getting past the last eight stage are low.
Key Player Wu Lei

KYRGYZSTAN
The Central Asians are making their debut and draw a high proportion of their players from coach Aleksandr Krestinin's club side, Dordoi Bishkek. Captain Edgar Bernhardt plays for GKS Tychy in Poland and there is no shortage of experience in this technically sound team.
Key Player Edgar Bernhardt

PHILIPPINES
A first appearance for the Azkals, but a tough opener against South Korea won't faze new coach Sven Goran Eriksson. Physical and direct, an experienced squad with a number of European-born stars, such as goalkeeper Neil Etheridge, will be tough to beat and delighted with the second round.
Key Player Neil Etheridge

GROUP D

IRAN
Well-drilled, experienced and with a squad spread around Europe and Asia, Iran also have Carlos Queiroz. After eight years in charge, the Portuguese coach would love nothing more than helping the side to a first title since the 1970s. Impressed against strong opposition at the World Cup but will have to take the game to Asian sides.
Key Player Sardar Azmoun

IRAQ
There's always plenty of talent in Iraq, though the 2007 champions are inconsistent and often suffer from poor preparations. New coach Srekco Katanec has a penchant for defensive solidity and discipline, and the Slovenian will be expected to do well.
Key Player Ali Adnan

VIETNAM
One of the fastest-improving teams in Asia, the Golden Stars are full of creativity and are also becoming harder to beat under Park Hang-seo, aka "The Korean Hiddink". The team has a nucleus from a successful under-23 side but January may be a little too soon for them.
Key Player Nguyen Quang Hai

YEMEN
A first appearance at the tournament finals for a team that qualified despite not being able to play at home. The reward is a tough group and the solid defence that brought the team to the UAE will have to step up a level. With years of conflict affecting local football, much depends on the sprinkling of overseas-based talent, but any place above fourth would be viewed as success for coach Jan Kocian.
Key Player Mohammed Ayash

GROUP E

SAUDI ARABIA
The Green Falcons ended the World Cup with a first win since 1994 – and that victory over Egypt saved the job of coach Juan Antonio Pizzi, who is trying to instil a more patient passing game. The team lacks a genuine goalscorer but a talented midfield should end any chances of a third successive group stage exit.
Key Player Salman Al Faraj

QATAR
Qualification for the 2018 World Cup didn't go well but the arrival of former Barcelona youth coach Felix Sanchez Bas looks fortuitous. A fairly young team, with few of the former infamous naturalised players, a victory over Switzerland and a draw with Iceland have earned them contender status.
Key Player Akram Afif

LEBANON
A first-ever qualification for the competition, the Cedars can be strong at home but don't always travel well. Tight at the back, conservative and hard-working, they tend to struggle in front of goal. With a tricky group, Montenegrin coach Miodrag Radulovic is under little pressure.
Key Player Hassan Maatouk

NORTH KOREA
This is not a vintage North Korean team as coach Kim Yong-jun tries to move away from a long-ball and hard-running style of play while bringing through a new generation of players. Still defensively solid, they can frustrate better teams but will struggle to make it past the last eight.
Key Player Ri Myong-guk

At the World Cup... (left to right) Iran's Sardar Azmoun, Morteza Pouraliganji and Ramin Rezaeian

GROUP F

JAPAN
The four-time champions fell at the last eight in 2015 but there is a new generation of young players. A lack of a top-class goalkeeper could hurt coach Hajime Moriyasuto's hopes of delivering title number five.
Key Player Yuya Osako

UZBEKISTAN
The central Asians have come close in the past and always have plenty of talent. A lack of a winning mentality has been a problem, but the appointment of Argentina's Hector Cuper will make them a tougher nut to crack.
Key Player Odil Ahmedov

OMAN
One of those mid-level teams that rarely make headlines, but coach Pim Verbeek knows Asia better than most. Solid defensively with just three goals conceded in the last 13 games, they often only need one goal to win.
Key Player Ali Al Habsi

TURKMENISTAN
Finishing above Taiwan and Singapore in the group stage may not be much preparation for Japan and Uzbekistan, so finishing a place above last would be worthy of celebration for coach Yazguly Hojageldyyew.
Key Player Ruslan Mingazow

2019 Asian Cup schedule

GROUP A

Jan 5	United Arab Emirates v Bahrain	(Zayed Sports City Stadium)
Jan 6	Thailand v India	(Al Nahyan Stadium)
Jan 10	Bahrain v Thailand	(Al Maktoum Stadium)
Jan 10	India v United Arab Emirates	(Zayed Sports City Stadium)
Jan 14	United Arab Emirates v Thailand	(Hazza bin Zayed Stadium)
Jan 14	India v Bahrain	(Sharjah Stadium)

GROUP B

Jan 6	Australia v Jordan	(Hazza bin Zayed Stadium)
Jan 6	Syria v Palestine	(Sharjah Stadium)
Jan 10	Jordan v Syria	(Khalifa bin Zayed Stadium)
Jan 11	Palestine v Australia	(Maktoum bin Rashid Al Maktoum Stadium)
Jan 15	Australia v Syria	(Khalifa bin Zayed Stadium)
Jan 15	Palestine v Jordan	(Mohammed bin Zayed Stadium)

GROUP C

Jan 7	China v Kyrgyzstan	(Khalifa bin Zayed Stadium)
Jan 7	South Korea v Philippines	(Al Maktoum Stadium)
Jan 11	Philippines v China	(Mohammed bin Zayed Stadium)
Jan 11	Kyrgyzstan v South Korea	(Hazza bin Zayed Stadium)
Jan 16	South Korea v China	(Al Nahyan Stadium)
Jan 16	Kyrgyzstan v Philippines	(Maktoum bin Rashid Al Maktoum Stadium)

Group meeting... UAE's Ali Mabkhout (left) and Thailand's Theerathon Bunmathan

GROUP D

Jan 7	Iran v Yemen	(Mohammed bin Zayed Stadium)
Jan 8	Iraq v Vietnam	(Zayed Sports City Stadium)
Jan 12	Vietnam v Iran	(Al Nahyan Stadium)
Jan 12	Yemen v Iraq	(Sharjah Stadium)
Jan 16	Vietnam v Yemen	(Hazza bin Zayed Stadium)
Jan 16	Iran v Iraq	(Al Maktoum Stadium)

GROUP E

Jan 8	Saudi Arabia v North Korea	(Maktoum bin Rashid Al Maktoum Stadium)
Jan 9	Qatar v Lebanon	(Hazza bin Zayed Stadium)
Jan 12	Lebanon v Saudi Arabia	(Al Maktoum Stadium)
Jan 13	North Korea v Qatar	(Khalifa bin Zayed Stadium)
Jan 17	Saudi Arabia v Qatar	(Zayed Sports City Stadium)
Jan 17	Lebanon v North Korea	(Sharjah Stadium)

GROUP F

Jan 9	Japan v Turkmenistan	(Al Nahyan Stadium)
Jan 9	Uzbekistan v Oman	(Sharjah Stadium)
Jan 13	Oman v Japan	(Zayed Sports City Stadium)
Jan 13	Turkmenistan v Uzbekistan	(Maktoum bin Rashid Al Maktoum Stadium)
Jan 17	Oman v Turkmenistan	(Mohammed bin Zayed Stadium)
Jan 17	Japan v Uzbekistan	(Khalifa bin Zayed Stadium)

ROUND OF 16

Jan 20	Winner B v 3rd A/C/D	(Al Maktoum Stadium)	**(1)**
Jan 20	Runner-up A v Runner-up C	(Hazza bin Zayed Stadium)	**(2)**
Jan 20	Winner D v 3rd B/E/F	(Mohammed bin Zayed Stadium)	**(3)**
Jan 21	Winner F v Runner-up E	(Sharjah Stadium)	**(4)**
Jan 21	Runner-up B v Runner-up F	(Khalifa bin Zayed Stadium)	**(5)**
Jan 21	Winner A v 3rd C/D/E	(Zayed Sports City Stadium)	**(6)**
Jan 22	Winner C v 3rd A/B/F	(Maktoum bin Rashid Al Maktoum Stadium)	**(7)**
Jan 22	Winner E v Runner-up D	(Al Nahyan Stadium)	**(8)**

QUARTER-FINALS

Jan 24	Winner 1 v Winner 4	(Al Maktoum Stadium)	**(A)**
Jan 24	Winner 2 v Winner 3	(Mohammed bin Zayed Stadium)	**(B)**
Jan 25	Winner 7 v Winner 8	(Zayed Sports City Stadium)	**(C)**
Jan 25	Winner 6 v Winner 5	(Hazza bin Zayed Stadium)	**(D)**

SEMI-FINALS

Jan 28	Winner B v Winner A	(Hazza bin Zayed Stadium)
Jan 29	Winner C v Winner D	(Mohammed bin Zayed Stadium)

FINAL

Feb 1		(Zayed Sports City Stadium)

Brazil

TIM VICKERY

Scolari proves perfect match for Palmeiras

Former national coach defies doubters

Luiz Felipe Scolari walked into a storm at the end of July when he took charge of Palmeiras for a third time. Coach of the national side when they lost 7-1 to Germany in the 2014 World Cup semi-finals, he was denounced as a has-been and a backward step for an ambitious club.

On his arrival, Palmeiras were sixth in the table, eight points behind the leaders. They did not lose another league game and cruised to the title with an eight-point margin while also reaching the semi-finals of the Brazilian and Libertadores Cups.

At his best as a man-manager, where his "father figure, strong man, with a sentimental streak" act goes down best, Palmeiras proved ideal for "Big Phil".

With their impressive new stadium proving a successful source of income and the backing of a wealthy sponsor, the Sao Paulo-based club are well funded and have assembled a deep squad – with the number of options available perhaps confounding Scolari's less-experienced predecessor, Roger Machado.

Scolari used the depth of the squad to his advantage by turning the deficiency of the Brazilian calendar into a positive.

With so many games to play, many clubs are forced to prioritise. And with huge prize money and a place in the following year's Libertadores at stake, plenty choose to concentrate on the domestic cup, often putting out reserve sides for league games.

Palmeiras, though, have enough players to form two strong sides, so Scolari played one team in the cup and, with a little crossover, another in the league. By doing so, everyone felt important and the results started to flow.

But the same cannot be said of their football as there was little flow about Palmeiras. Their league triumph was based on deep defence and quick counter attacks – a cautious model of play that served them, and other Brazilian clubs, badly in the Libertadores.

The 2018 national championship will certainly not go down as a vintage year as a paucity of ideas was met by – with the exception of Palmeiras – a paucity of resources.

Cruzeiro were happy to win the Brazilian Cup and drift along mid-table, while Gremio came close to a second successive Libertadores Final but lost some of the shine of their pleasing, possession-based game on their way to finishing fourth in the league. Flamengo finished runners-up to Palmeiras but ended the year with a sentiment of frustration after coming up short in the cup competitions. They played well in patches but were undermined by a continued failure to add more pace to the heart of their defence.

Among the season's surprise sides were promoted Internacional, who were not expected to be serious contenders but performed solidly to finish third, and Sao Paulo who many had seen as relegation candidates. They led the pack for a while before trailing away to finish fifth and their Uruguayan coach, Diego Aguirre, was a classic case of being a victim of his own success. He executed the counter-attacking model so well that dreams of a title challenge developed, but when such unrealistic expectations could not be met he was sacked.

A decade after their last triumph, it is proving hard for Sao Paulo to watch the league title being shared by their local rivals over the past four years: Palmeiras coming top this year and in 2016, while 2015 and 17 belonged to Corinthians.

There was little chance this time round that Corinthians might hold on to their crown. While the new stadium of Palmeiras is a money-spinner, that of Corinthians is a drain. And while Palmeiras are financially sound, Corinthians have run into money problems – which meant they lost their coach and many key players during the mid-year transfer window, and ended the year being sucked dangerously

'Big Phil'...Scolari (in blue) with his Palmeiras side

Strugglers...Ayrton Lucas of Fluminense (right) and Vasco da Gama's Yago Pikachu

close to the relegation zone.

They were safe with a round to go, but it was a nervy last Sunday for Chapecoense and Rio giants Vasco da Gama and Fluminense.

It was entirely predictable that Chapecoense's second season after the air disaster would prove harder than the first, and so it proved. Vasco, meanwhile, have been in financial and political turmoil for a while and were threatened with their fourth relegation in a decade. Fluminense's grave financial problems saw them field a cut-price team that had been in mid-table until a run of seven games without a goal left them gasping for air.

All three would have been down with a defeat in their final game, but all three managed to hang on: Chapecoense in relative comfort, Fluminense with a streaky 1-0 win and Vasco grimly protecting a goalless draw.

Instead, Parana and America Mineiro were relegated, along with Sport and Vitoria, the two potential giants from the under-represented north east of the country. But at least the region has a couple of replacements, with second-tier champions Fortaleza and runners-up CSA from Maceio – who managed a third consecutive promotion – going up, along with Avai and Goias.

Despite all the 2014 World Cup investments, Brazilian football's centre of gravity lies as strongly as ever in the south east and the south, with those areas supplying all but four of the 20 top-flight sides, all of 2018's top 10 and every winner for the last 30 years. WS

Cup winner...Rafinha of Cruzeiro

Challengers...Internacional (in red) keep out Gremio

Season's best

Leader ...Dudu

PLAYER OF THE YEAR
Dudu (Palmeiras)
Quick and bright in wide areas, he was the leader of his side's counter attack.

COACH OF THE YEAR
Luiz Felipe Scolari (Palmeiras)
A triumphant return to Brazilian football for the former national coach who, at 70, became the oldest man to win the league.

NEWCOMER OF THE YEAR
Rodrygo (Santos)
A 17-year-old winger who combines extravagant skill with a quick brain, he will join Real Madrid for €45million in June.

USA

PAUL GARDNER

Atlanta win the MLS Cup

Champions bring some Latin sparkle to the title

For MLS, 2018 was its most successful year yet, as well as being the most spectacular, with all the excitement centered on the city of Atlanta.

Although not usually thought of as a soccer mecca, the season proved just how dramatically the US soccer scene has changed over the past four decades.

In 1969 the North American Soccer League was on its last legs. After only two years of existence it was reduced to a mere five teams, including the Atlanta Chiefs. The NASL closed its swanky New York offices and fled to... Atlanta. The league struggled to stay alive but Atlanta had offered a lifeline and the NASL built itself up to 24 teams before a new crisis saw it fold in 1984.

But from what was one of soccer's darkest hours, Atlanta has now emerged as the home of arguably the most successful professional soccer team ever seen in the United States.

The brand new Atlanta United played their first MLS game in 2017 and immediately drew huge crowds to the Mercedes-Benz Stadium, home of the Atlanta Falcons gridiron team.

Coached by Argentina's Gerardo Martino and built around young South American talent, Atlanta posted an astonishing average attendance of 48,200 in their debut season.

Nothing was won in 2017, but a year later Atlanta United beat Portland Timbers 2-0 to become MLS champions, with their average attendance jumping to just over 53,000 – with a league record 73,019 fans watching the MLS Cup Final.

But the enormous crowds were only part of the story for Atlanta who brought something different to MLS: the sparkle of Latin-American soccer. While Diego

Attraction...the MLS Cup Final drew a record crowd to the Mercedes-Benz Stadium

Almiron of Paraguay ignited the team's attacking play, the star of the show was undoubtedly Venezuelan forward Josef Martinez. Along with another Paraguayan, Hector Villalba, they made Atlanta the league's most exciting team to watch.

Now a league with 23 teams, things look good for MLS and further expansion is planned, with a waiting list of cities eager to acquire a franchise allowing them to operate a team.

Inevitably, there were voices warning MLS not to overdo the celebrations and the most significant warning came from the MLS Commissioner Don Garber. In his 2018 "State of the League" address, he turned his attention to what has been a growing concern for years – that the ambition to become one of the world's top leagues cannot possibly be achieved under MLS' strict financial restrictions, such as salary caps.

MLS has been chipping away at those restrictions ever since the arrival of David Beckham in 2007 and the creation of the "Designated Player" category which allows for a top star's inflated wage not to count against the salary cap.

At the same time, MLS clubs have been encouraged to spend millions on creating youth academies to nurture their own young stars.

But none of that has ensured MLS clubs turn a profit.

Garber put it bluntly, declaring that the league's current policies of using mechanisms such as the Designated Player scheme to sign foreign stars, plus the spending on youth academies, are "unsustainable" if the club owners do not see a return on their investment.

The crux of the problem is that MLS cannot hold on to its young stars, be they imports or home-grown. Already, after only two years, Atlanta is losing its key player, with Almiron reportedly on his way to Europe. Martino is also leaving, to coach the Mexico's national team.

This constant drain of talent cannot favour the development of club traditions and fan loyalty. But Garber suggests that the way out of this constant loss of players is simply to accept it as fact and learn to profit from it

"How do you retain your stars? Create consistency," argues Garber. "We're part of the global game, part of the beautiful game. We have been buying for so long and, as we've gone through the analysis, it's hard to justify that investment and the investment that we have to make in player development.

"We've got to have something that turns this model around or else it's going to be unsustainable."

Garber admits that "this is a big issue for our league" and cites the reality of "international clubs chasing our young players".

He also says that MLS needs to be finding ways "to get compensated if we can't protect or sign [these young players]", and without such compensation he feels pushed to say that "I don't know how we can justify making the kind of investments we've been making".

In short, MLS "needs to become more of a selling league".

The vision of a league that is incessantly selling off its best young players is hardly an attractive one. But to become a "selling league", thus producing enough income to satisfy investors, the MLS academies will have to be producing a steady stream of young stars – which is something they have so far failed to do.

Yes, foreign clubs will invest in youngsters, but not by spending wildly. A recent payment of $20million by Bayern Munich to Vancouver Whitecaps for the 17-year-old Alphonso Davies has undoubtedly raised expectations. But the amount is exceptional and unlikely to be repeated. Such transfer fees are more usually around $5m – amounts that will almost certainly not make MLS a particularly profitable "selling league".

Selling overseas stars such as Almiron will bring in higher sums, but they are offset by the bigger transfer fees paid by the MLS clubs to acquire those players.

In short, it seems that the only sure-fire way of hanging on to its star players is for MLS to enter the global soccer player market – which means paying salaries at a level far higher than current MLS rates. WS

Champions...Atlanta United

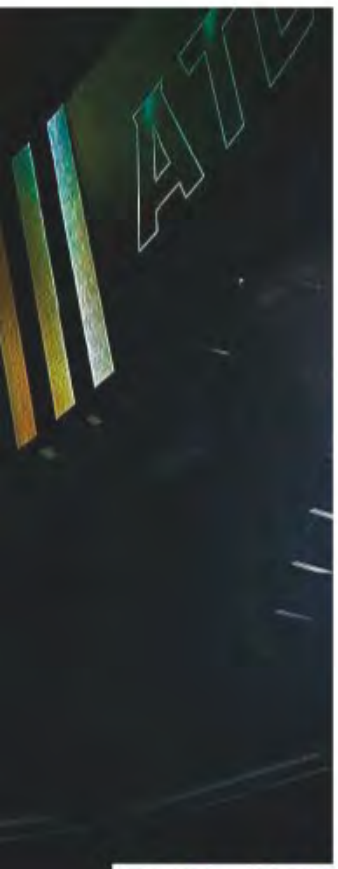
Season's best

PLAYER OF THE YEAR
Josef Martinez (Atlanta United)
The Venezuelan broke the MLS record for goals scored in a season with 31 in 34 games and was voted MVP for both the regular season and the MLS Cup Final.

COACH OF THE YEAR
Gerardo Martino (Atlanta United)
In two season at Atlanta, "Tata" brought tactical sophistication and heavyweight contacts, culminating in the title, before heading off to take charge of Mexico.

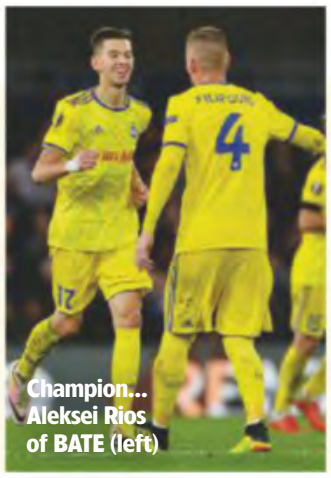
NEWCOMER OF THE YEAR
Corey Baird (Real Salt Lake)
The former Stanford University attacker managed eight goals and five assists in his first professional campaign.

Germany calling... Alphonso Davies



Number two...Atlanta's Franco Escobar scores against Portland Timbers

	HOW THE LEAGUE WAS WON	CUP WINNERS	WHO QUALIFIED FOR EUROPE
Belarus PREMIER LEAGUE *by Oleg Zadernovsky*	Nine points clear of runners-up Shakhtyor Soligorsk, BATE were champions for a 13th season in succession, continuing a domestic monopoly that began in 2006.	Cup holders Dinamo Brest retained the trophy with a 3-2 victory over BATE in the Final. Having trailed twice at the Spartak Stadium in Mogilev, Pavel Nyakhaychyk sealed victory in the 89th minute.	BATE go into the first qualifying round of the Champions League, while Shakhtyor Soligorsk and Dinamo Brest start in the first qualifying round of the Europa League.
Estonia MEISTRILIIGA *by Andres Must*	Nomme Kalju, Flora and Levadia all went into their final game of the season with hopes of winning the championship, but Kalju's 4-1 victory at home to Narva Trans secured their second title and a first since 2012.	Having merged with 2016 league winners Infonet Tallinn in 2017, Levadia won the Final in May, beating Flora 1-0 with a goal from Roman Debelko.	Vaprus were relegated to the second tier and swap places with Esiliiga winners Maardu Linnameeskond, while Kuressaare retained their top-flight status with a 2-0 aggregate victory over Elva in a play-off.
Faroe Islands PREMIER LEAGUE *by Nick Bidwell*	Torshavn-based HB strolled to their first national crown in five years, winning 24 of their 27 league fixtures and losing only twice. The title was wrapped up a month before the end of the season with a 2-1 win away at KI, who finished fourth, behind runners-up NSI Runavik and B36.	In a bad-tempered local derby, B36 defied the odds to beat HB on penalties in the Final. Twice behind in normal time, B36 were reduced to nine men following two late red cards before coming up with a 95th-minute equaliser to make the score 2-2 and eventually go to spot-kicks.	Champions HB will take part in the first qualifying round of the Champions League. NSI Runavik, B36 and KI all have a Europa League preliminary round appointment.
Finland VEIKKAUSLIIGA *by John Holmesdale*	HJK were once again the runaway champions, retaining their title by finishing 16 points ahead of second-placed RoPS. It was the Helsinki club's eighth title in 10 years.	In the second year of the new competition format, running from autumn to spring, Inter Turku beat holders HJK 1-0 in the Final in May.	HJK go into the Champions League first qualifying round, with RoPS, KuPS and Inter Turku in the Europa League preliminaries.
Georgia EROVNULI LIGA *by Oleg Zadernovsky*	Only established in 1999 and named after one of the districts of the Georgian capital Tbilisi, Saburtalo won the league for the first time, clinching the title with three games to spare by beating Dinamo Tbilisi 2-1.	Torpedo Kutaisi won the cup for a fourth time, beating modest second-tier side Gagra on penalties after a 2-2 draw.	Saburtalo are in the Champions League first qualifying round, while, Dinamo Tbilisi, Torpedo Kutaisi and Chikhura Sachkhere are in the Europa League first qualifying round.
Iceland URVALSDEILD KARLA *by Skapti Hallgrimsson*	With three clubs still in title contention going into the final game of the season, Valur retained their crown with a 4-1 victory at home to Keflavik. After a decade of instability and mid-table performances, they were worthy winners.	Beaten finalists in 2012 and 2013, Stjarnan won the cup for the first time, beating Breidablik in the Final on penalties after a goalless draw.	Valur will enter the Champions League in the first qualifying round. Breidablik, Stjarnan and KR all start in the first qualifying round of the Europa League. FH, Iceland's most decorated team for the last decade and a half, missed out for the first time in 16 years.

RELEGATED/ PROMOTED		PLAYER OF THE SEASON	COACH OF THE SEASON	NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
Dnepr Mogilev finished bottom and went down with Smolevitchi, who lost out in a three-way head-to-head battle after finishing level on points with Luch Minsk and Torpedo Minsk. Second-tier champions Slavia Mozyr and Energetik-BGU were promoted.	 Champion... Aleksei Rios of BATE (left)	Captain of champions BATE, 33-year-old midfielder Ihar Stasevich played a huge role in another national title success, scoring eight goals in his 28 games.	Having replaced the hugely experienced Oleg Dulub, 37-year-old Alyaksey Baha continued BATE's run of championship successes.	Albanian forward Elis Bakaj joined Shakhtyor Soligorsk from Kukesi for €120,000 in March 2018 and scored nine league goals to help his new club to finish in second place and secure a Europa League spot.
League winners Nomme Kalju go into the draw for the first qualifying round of the Champions League, while Levadia and Flora start at the same stage of the Europa League.	Gone...Dante Leverock	Flora's attacking midfielder Zakaria Beglarishvili was the league's second-top scorer with 30 goals. Having made one appearance for his native Georgia, he now hopes to be considered for Estonia's national side.	Having finished third in his first two seasons with Kalju, Sergei Frantsev agreed a one-year extension a few weeks after claiming top spot this time round.	A central defender who scored eight goals for Narva Trans, 26-year-old Bermuda international Dante Leverock left Narva Trans for Republic of Ireland side Sligo Rovers after just one season.
As many predicted, the defensively-challenged 07 Vestur were bottom, but they only finished a point adrift of Argja Boltfelag. They will be replaced by second division top dogs IF, who successfully regrouped after demotion from the elite in 2017.	Materclass ...Heimar Gudjonsson	The leading marksman in the championship with 20 goals, HB winger Adrian Justinussen was in outstanding form and was especially dangerous when letting fly from long range.	In his first season in charge of HB, Heimir Gudjonsson, gave a masterclass in team-building, tactical appreciation and feet-on-the-ground attitude. He was five times an Icelandic champion in his homeland as coach of FH.	Aged 16 years and nine months when making his first-team debut for KI in March, central midfielder Oli Poulsen seemed to grow in stature and effectiveness with every game for the Klaksvik club.
Palloseura Kemi Kings were relegated, while TPS lost the play-off to second-tier KPV. HIFK, who were last season's play-off losers, won automatic promotion to the top flight.	Outstanding ...Lassi Lappalainen	The 21-year-old Brazilian striker Joao Klauss, on loan to HJK from Hoffenheim, finished as the league's top scorer with 21 goals. He made a substantial impression on the league campaign but has now returned to his parent club in Germany.	Mika Lehkosuo won another title with HJK and has agreed to stay on for at least another year.	On loan from HJK, winger Lassi Lappalainen had an outstanding campaign for RoPS, contributing plenty of goals and assists. He will return to his parent club next season.
Deducted six points, Kolkheti Poti finished bottom and were demoted automatically, being replaced by Dinamo Batumi. Sioni Bolnisi and Samtredia will play off against Gagra and WIT Georgia respectively to retain their top-flight status.	Euro-bound... Torpedo Kutaisi's Giorgi Kukhianidze	Dinamo Tbilisi academy graduate Budu Zivzivadze, who was on loan from Danish club Esbjerg, scored 22 times in 34 games.	Appointed coach of Saburtalo in October 2016, Giorgi Chiabrishvili guided his small club to a famous title win.	Brazilian forward Leandro Ribeiro returned to Dila in March 2018 on loan from Maccabi Netanya and scored 14 goals in his first full season of elite division football in Georgia.
Former giants IA were promoted along with runners-up HK. They replace Fjolnir and Keflavík, who were by far the weakest team with just four points from 22 games.	Re-energised ...Olafur Johannesson	Danish striker Patrick Pedersen had a great season with Valur. As well as celebrating a champions' medal, he topped the scoring charts with 17 goals in 22 games.	Former national coach Olafur Johannesson took charge of Valur in 2015 and re-energised a team that for a decade had suffered from multiple changes of coaches. In four seasons the club has now been champions twice and won the Icelandic Cup twice.	Breidablik's 20-year-old defensive midfielder Willum Thor Willumsson is an under-21 international and the son of a former player and coach who now is a member of the Icelandic parliament.

EUROPEAN SEASON REVIEW

	HOW THE LEAGUE WAS WON	CUP WINNERS	WHO QUALIFIED FOR EUROPE
Kazakhstan PREMIER LEAGUE *by Nick Bidwell*	Owned and financed by the government, Astana live on a different planet to their domestic competitors and claimed their fifth consecutive title, despite having a caretaker coach, in Grigori Babayan, for much of the campaign.	Cup specialists Kairat successfully retained the trophy, beating Atyrau 1-0 in the Final. The unexpected hero of the hour was full-back Aleksandr Sokolenko, who popped up with an all-too-rare goal on 15 minutes.	Aiming for a second appearance in the Champions League group phase, Astana will start in the first qualifying round of the competition. Kairat, Tobol and Ordabasy will take part in the Europa League eliminators.
Latvia VIRSLIGA *by Nick Bidwell*	After a sluggish start to the season, Riga became an irresistible force when the ex-Werder Bremen boss Viktor Skrypnyk took over in early July. Seven straight wins had the team soaring and they clinched a first title with a game to spare.	Ten days before their coronation as league champions, Riga won the cup with a penalty shoot-out victory over Ventspils. After a goalless 120 minutes, Roberts Ozols saved the decisive kick from Nauris Bulvitis.	Riga will start the Champions League in the first qualifying round. League runners-up Ventspils, third-place RFS and Liepaja, who were fourth, will be part of the Europa League sifting process.
Lithuania A LYGA *by Nick Bidwell*	For the second consecutive season, Suduva proved the pick of the crop, remaining in pole position from gun to tape, even though runners-up Zalgiris had the better head-to-head record, winning three of their five games with Suduva.	In a repeat of last year's Final – in which Stumbras beat Zalgiris – the latter gained revenge with a 3-0 win, courtesy of goals from Tomas Simkovic, Marko Tomic and Marquinhos.	Suduva will begin their Champions League journey at the initial qualification phase. Zalgiris, third-place Trakai and Stumbras, who were fourth, will try to force their way into the Europa League proper.
Moldova NATIONAL DIVISION *by Miron Goihman*	Sheriff made it four league titles in a row, extending their national record to a total of 17. They have only finished off top spot twice since 2001.	Winners in 2012, Milsami lifted the cup for a second time, beating Zimbru Chisinau 2-0 in the Final with two goals in extra-time from sub Maxim Antoniuc.	As usual, Sheriff will play in the Champions league qualifiers. Milsami and Petrocub Hincesti go into the Europa League. One more Europa League place will be allocated after the 2019 Cup Final in May.
Norway ELITESERIEN *by John Holmesdale*	Rosenborg won their fourth consecutive title – and 26th in total – after a difficult campaign in which coach Kare Ingebrigtsen was controversially sacked before a Champions League qualifier against Celtic.	Rosenborg completed the double with a 4-1 victory over Stromsgodset at Oslo's Ullevaal stadium. Despite a conviction for assault, Nicklas Bendtner, played and scored twice as RBK won the competition for a 12th time.	Champions Rosenborg will compete in the first qualifying round of next season's Champions League, with Molde, Brann and Haugesund in the Europa League qualifiers.
Republic of Ireland PREMIER DIVISION *by Sean Creedon*	After surrendering their championship title to Cork City last season, Dundalk bounced back to win their fourth league crown in five years, setting new records for the Premier Division with 85 goals and 87 points for the season.	Dundalk made it a second league and cup double in four years, beating Cork City 2-1 in the Final. Cork were bidding to win the trophy for the third year in a row, but Patrick McEleney scored the Lilywhites' winner in the second half.	Dundalk will start in the Champions League first qualifying round. Cork City and Shamrock Rovers go into the Europa League first qualifying round with Waterford, who are in Europe for the first time since 1986.
Sweden ALLSVENSKAN *by Nick Bidwell*	After Hammarby lost momentum, AIK surged to the front of the queue in July and won the title for the first time in nine years, losing just one league game all season – a 2-0 reverse to Norrkoping, who finished runners-up.	Playing the Final on their home ground in Stockholm, Djurgarden had little difficulty inflicting a 3-0 defeat on a theoretically stronger Malmo, with goals from Jacob Une Larsson, Kerim Mrabti and Jonathan Ring.	AIK are bound for the first Champions League qualifying round, while Norrkoping and third-placed Malmo will start in the first pre-qualification stage of the Europa League. Djurgarden enter at the next stage.

RELEGATED/ PROMOTED		PLAYER OF THE SEASON	COACH OF THE SEASON	NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
Kyzlzhar, who came up the previous season, and bottom-place Akzhayik were sent back down to the minors. Stepping into their shoes will be second-tier champions Okzhetpes and runners-up Taraz.	Decisive... Marin Tomasov	Week in and week out, winger Marin Tomasov was a decisive figure for Astana, as productive in his finishing as his creative work. Originally on loan from Rijeka, the 31-year-old Croat signed a permanent deal in July.	Dmitry Ogai, a Kazakh of Korean lineage, did a fine job of keeping the relegation wolf from the door for top-flight new boys Zhetysu. Their mid-table finish surpassed all expectations.	Kairat centre-back Nuraly Alip is quite a prospect. Turning 19 in December, he plays with the poise and the assurance of a veteran. Had completed just two first-team games when handed his first full cap for Kazakhstan in March.
Newly promoted Valmieras finished bottom with eight points and are replaced by second-tier champions Daugavpils. METTA/LU saved their bacon with a 10-2 aggregate thrashing of second-tier runners-up Super Nova in a play-off.	Unbeaten ...Viktor Skrypnyk	Riga centre-forward Darko Lemajic not only offers an aerial threat with his physical presence, the 25-year-old Serb is also surprisingly mobile and clever on the ball.	Excellent in his game analysis and organisation, ex-Ukraine international defender Viktor Skrypnyk made all the difference at Riga. He did not lose a league game in charge, bagging 36 points from a possible 42.	Just 17, versatile midfielder Kristers Tobers quickly established himself as a pivotal figure in the Liepaja engine room. Already in the Latvian under-21 fold.
After winning just four games all season, Jonava tumbled out of the top flight. Panevezys won the second division and will have a first taste of the A Lyga. Palanga retained their top-flight status by beating Dainava in a play-off.	Key...Ivan Kardum	Suduva's Croat keeper Ivan Kardum was a key component in his club's successful title defence, keeping a clean sheet in more than half his starts.	Formerly in charge of the national teams of Ghana and Ethiopia, Goa-born Mariano Baretto worked something of a miracle at Stumbras, turning ragged relegation candidates into a solid top-four side.	Despite playing for a struggling Atlantas, teenage right-back Deividas Siusa generally gave an excellent account of himself. Poised and disciplined, he was not at all overwhelmed by his promotion from the youth ranks.
Zaria Balti finished bottom of the league and will be replaced by A Division champions Codru Lozova.	Impressed ...Ziguy Badibanga	A graduate of Anderlecht's youth academy, Sherif's Belgian striker Ziguy Badibanga impressed with eight goals and eight asissts.	Lilian Popescu guided Petrocub to third place in the league for a second successive season, which is considered a big success for a small provincial club.	Many young Moldovan players moved to foreign clubs this year and 20-year-old Zaria Balti forward Vadim Gulceac is the best of the next crop that are coming through.
Sandefjord and Start were replaced by Viking and Mjoendalen. Stabaek beat Aalesund 2-1 in a play-off to retain their position.	Cup winners ...Rosenborg	Rosenborg keeper Andre Hansen was voted the Eliteserien's best player, ahead of team-mate Birger Meling and Molde midfielder Eirik Hestad. Hansen now has ambitions to play abroad.	Svein Maalen led newly promoted Ranheim to a comfortable seventh place in their first top-flight campaign for 62 years.	Erling Braut Haaland, the son of former international Alf-Inge, scored 12 goals for runners-up Molde, earning a January transfer to Red Bull Salzburg.
UCD won the First Division and are joined in the step up to the Premier Division by Finn Harps, who beat second from bottom Limerick in a play-off. Bray Wanderers were automatically relegated from the top flight.	Pressure... Dundalk attack Cork in the Cup	Patrick Hoban of Dundalk became the first player to score 29 goals since the League of Ireland Premier Division began in 1985. Top scorer when Dundalk won the league in 2014, the 27-year-old rejoined the club in November 2017.	With four league titles and two FAI Cups since taking over at Dundalk in 2012, Stephen Kenny stepped down at the end of the season to take charge of the national under-21 side. He will take over the senior team after Euro 2020.	Starting the season on loan at Bohemians from Leicester City, 21-year-old midfielder Dylan Watts joined arch-rivals Shamrock Rovers in July after being released by the English club. An exciting player, he loves to run at defences.
Trelleborg and Dalkurd return to the Superettan, with their places going to Helsingborg, who won the second tier, and Falkenbergs. In the play-off, Brommapojkarna lost to and are replaced by Eskilstuna.	Title...AIK	Hacken's Brazilian left-winger Paulinho was a limitless source of attacking inspiration for the Gothenburg outfit, earning the domestic Golden Boot with 20 goals and making nine others.	The mastermind of Malmo's league title back in 2013, Rikard Norling brought the same Midas touch to bear at AIK. His strong suit was an ability to construct a defensive fortress – one which conceded just 16 goals in 30 league games.	One of the rare rays of sunshine in a season of gloom for Brommapojkarna was 17-year-old winger Jack Lahne. Zambia-born but raised in the Stockholm region, he came through the club's impressive academy.

NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 13, 2018

Global diary

A comprehensive record of recent events around the world

Thursday November 22

EGYPT: Beaten by Esperance in the CAF Champions League Final earlier in the month, Al Ahly sack coach Patrice Carteron for failing to deliver a ninth continental title.

Friday November 23

BANGLADESH: Two players from each side are sent off as Dhaka Abahani lift the Federation Cup for a third successive year with a 3-1 victory over Bashundhara Kings.
GERMANY: Borussia Dortmund sign on-loan Paco Alcacer from Barcelona for a reported €23m.
SPAIN: German magazine *Der Spiegel* reports that Real Madrid captain Sergio Ramos failed a drugs test after the 2017 Champions League Final victory over Juventus.

Saturday November 24

ARGENTINA: The second leg of the Libertadores Cup Final is postponed for 24 hours after Boca Juniors' team bus is attacked by River Plate supporters.
ENGLAND: Maurizio Sarri suffers his first loss as Chelsea boss with a 3-1 defeat at Tottenham Hotspur.
FRANCE: Thierry Henry wins his first game as a coach, at the seventh time of asking, as Monaco beat fellow strugglers Caen 1-0.
GERMANY: On loan from Watford, Dodi Lukebakio is the first player to score a Bundesliga hat-trick against Bayern Munich since Schalke's Ebbe Sand in 2001 as Fortuna Dusseldorf earn a 3-3 draw.
ITALY: Giorgio Chiellini comes on as a sub in a 2-0 victory over SPAL and his 483rd appearance for Juventus puts him fifth on the club's all-time list.
SPAIN: Santiago Solari's first game as Real Madrid's full-time coach ends in a 3-0 loss at Eibar. Ousmane Dembele gets a last-minute equaliser as Barcelona draw 1-1 at Atletico Madrid.

Sunday November 25

ARGENTINA: Three hours before kick-off, the Libertadores Cup Final is postponed for a second time.
BRAZIL: Palmeiras win 1-0 at Vasco da Gama and are crowned Brazilian champions for a 10th time.
CHINA: Cedric Bakambu's penalty earns Beijing Guoan a 1-1 draw with Shandong Luneng in their home leg of the Chinese Cup Final.
EGYPT: Ghanaian striker John Antwi gets a hat-trick in Misr Lel-Makkasa's 4-3 victory over ENPPI to become the top foreign scorer in Egyptian football with 63 goals.
MOROCCO: Raja take a 3-0 lead against V Club of DR Congo in their home leg of the CAF Confederation Cup Final.
PERU: A 1-1 draw at Universidad San Martin sees Melgar clinch the Clausura title.
REPUBLIC OF IRELAND: Mick McCarthy is appointed manager of Republic of Ireland but he will be replaced by Stephen Kenny after Euro 2020.
VENEZUELA: Deportivo Lara beat La Guaira 1-0 in the Clausura play-off Final and will now face Apertura champions Zamora.

Monday November 26

GEORGIA: Saburtalo beat Dinamo Tbilisi 2-1 to win the league title for the first time.

Tuesday November 27

CAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE: ASF Bobo Dioulasso of Burkina Faso shock 2008 runners-up Coton Sport of Cameroon with a 3-1 win in the first leg of their preliminary-round tie. Al Nasr of Libya thrash Al Hilal Juba of South Sudan 5-1 on their competition debut.
GERMANY: A man identified as "Sergej W", who carried out a bomb attack on Borussia Dortmund's team bus before a Champions League game against Monaco in 2017, is jailed for 14 years.
UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE: Ajax qualify for the knockout stage of the tournament for the first time in 12 years, where they are joined by Bayern Munich, Juventus, Manchester City, Manchester United, Real Madrid and Roma.
UKRAINE: Following the introduction of martial law in several regions in Ukraine, the Europa League game between Vorskla Poltava and Arsenal is moved to Kiev.
UZBEKISTAN: Lokomotiv Tashkent beat Pakhtakor Tashkent 3-2 to win

Hat-trick...Niklas Sule and his Bayern Munich team-mates struggled to find a way to stop Fortuna Dusseldorf's Dodi Lukebakio (left)

Play-off win... Deportivo Lara

the Uzbekistan Super League for a third successive season.

Wednesday November 28

CAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE: Semi-finalists last season, Primeiro de Agosto of Angola come from two goals down at home to beat AS Otoho of Congo 4-2 in their preliminary round first leg.

LIBYA: Al Ittihad beat Miracle Club de Bandrani of the Comoros 8-0 to set a new record for an away win in the CAF Confederations Cup.

PARAGUAY: Olimpia beat Guarani 4-1 to win the Clausura with two games to spare.

QATAR: Al Sadd defender Abdelkarim Hassan is named AFC Player of the Year.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND: Having been appointed assistant to new national manager Mick McCarthy, Robbie Keane – who is the country's record appearances holder and scorer, with 68 goals in 148 games – announces his ➤

Asia's best...Abdelkarim Hassan

Montserrat

STEVE MENARY

Line-up...the national team before taking on Belize

Gold Cup within reach

Former Manchester City star within a game of the finals

One of the world's lowest ranked and most inactive national teams, Montserrat are on the verge of a major finals. While many of the smaller Caribbean islands in CONCACAF's new Nations Leagues have suffered heavy losses, the tiny British overseas territory have won two of their three games so far. And if Montserrat win away to the Cayman Islands on March 22, qualification for the 2019 Gold Cup finals in the USA could be theirs.

For an island with a population of just 5,000 and no functioning league, not to mention a national team that had not played since a 2-2 draw with Curacao two-and-a-half years ago, that's some performance.

"All the players were in a What's App group and people were asking what's going on when we didn't play again. But we all stayed in touch and then it all kicked off again," says striker Massiah McDonald, whose father left the island aged 11 for Jamaica before emigrating to the UK.

The team's catalyst has been former Manchester City left-back Willie Donachie, who took charge in early 2018. Despite just two training sessions in the UK he built a competitive side, and an opening 2-1 defeat at home to El Salvador was followed by a 1-0 win over Belize and a 2-0 victory in Aruba.

"We're all very optimistic regarding qualification now," says defender Joey Taylor. "After the El Salvador game it was quiet. We all saw what it meant to everyone in Montserrat, what it meant to them to get the game on there, and we wanted to repay them against Belize and Aruba."

Taylor, who qualified through his father's grandparents, is a defender for English eighth-tier side Horsham. His brother Lyle, who scored against El Salvador, plays for Charlton Athletic and is one of two Football League players, the other being midfielder Brandon Comley of Colchester United.

"Against El Salvador we didn't have a lot of possession," admits Joey Taylor. "We knew they would pass the ball about. Willie said from the get-go that we're not playing two-touch football; we're getting the ball in their half and playing with the ball there.

"It was very physical. We turned it into a longer game and made it more direct. I don't think that El Salvador coped with that and it rattled Belize. They didn't get to play the game they wanted."

No one is apologising for the style and McDonald, who plays for Southern Premier League side Barwell, adds: "It might not look pretty at times but we put teams under pressure. It works for us."

Qualification for the Gold Cup would be a major fillip for Donachie, who was once reserve-team manager at Newcastle United and splits his time between working for Montserrat and running the academy at League One side Accrington Stanley.

He says: "I'm not snobbish about football. I love watching Man City, but Pep Guardiola will be the first to tell you that the most important thing is to win."

Two thirds of Montserrat's population were evacuated after the Soufriere Hills volcano erupted in 1995 and destroyed the capital, Plymouth. Most left for Britain but the Montserrat FA is now also looking for players in Canada and Cyprus.

"We need to get younger players for the future," says Donachie, whose search will surely be aided if Montserrat play in the Gold Cup. WS

➤ playing retirement, aged 38.
UEFA CHAMP LEAGUE: Atletico Madrid, Borussia Dortmund, Porto and Schalke seal last-16 places with a game to spare.

Thursday November 29

CYPRUS: Players' union FifPro reveals three unnamed players have been diagnosed with serious heart conditions after being given "unidentified substances" by their Cypriot clubs to aid recovery.
EUROPA LEAGUE: Dynamo Kiev, Fenerbahce, Real Betis, Red Bull Salzburg, Sporting and Zenit secure places in the knockout round.
LIBERTADORES CUP: CONMEBOL announce that the second leg of the Final between River Plate and Boca Juniors will be played on December 9 at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium in Madrid.

Friday November 30

CAMEROON: CAF takes hosting rights for the 2019 African Nations Cup away from Cameroon due to a lack of progress in preparation for a tournament that starts in June.
SIERRA LEONE: CAF's Executive Committee decides to expel Sierra Leone from the African Nations Cup qualifiers and all their matches are now annulled.
SPAIN: La Liga files a lawsuit with a civil court in Madrid to force the Spanish Football Association to allow Girona's home game against Barcelona on January 26 to be played in Miami.

Saturday December 1

CHILE: Universidad Catolica are crowned national champions as they beat Deportes Temuco 2-1 on the final day of the season.
CHINA: A 2-2 draw away to Shandong Luneng sees Beijing Guoan win the Chinese FA Cup on away goals after the Final finishes 3-3 on aggregate.

Sunday December 2

ENGLAND: Divock Origi scores in the 96th-minute as Liverpool beat Everton 1-0 in the 100th league derby to be played at Anfield.
FRANCE: After 14 successive wins, Paris Saint-Germain drop their first points of the season in Ligue 1 with a 2-2 draw away to Bordeaux.
HOLLAND: PSV Eindhoven's 100 per cent start to the Eredivisie season ends with a 2-1 loss to Feyenoord in their 14th game.
MOROCCO: Juan Carlos Garrido, who led Al Ahly to victory in 2014, becomes the first coach to win the CAF Confederation Cup with ➤

China

CAMERON WILSON

Balance of power shifts

SIPG end Guangzhou Evergrande dominance

In a momentous 2018 season, Shanghai SIPG won their first Chinese Super League (CSL) title, foiling Guangzhou Evergrande's bid for an eighth straight championship and as good as sealing the trophy by winning 5-4 away to the defending champions in early November.

Shanghai were propelled to the championship by the goals of Wu Lei, who formed a potent attacking unit along with Brazilian striker Hulk and ex-Chelsea midfielder Oscar, who was ably partnered by strong-running Uzbekistan international Odil Ahmedov.

Shanghai SIPG started the year as they meant to go on, demolishing Dalian Yifang 8-0 on the first day of the season. Other key results included a hard-fought 1-0 victory at Beijing Guoan and another victory over Guangzhou Evergrande, this time at home. SIPG also completed a clean sweep in the Shanghai derby against bitter rivals Shenhua, winning 2-0 both home and away.

Wu Lei's leading role in their title win was a rare success story for Chinese football, with the Nanjing-born striker featuring for the club in every season of its existence since its foundation in 2005 as Shanghai East Asia.

Originally established as a team to represent the academy of legendary Chinese coach Xu Genbao, the club worked its way up from the third tier and was only promoted to the CSL in 2013. The following year, Xu sold the club to local shipping conglomerate SIPG, who changed the name of the team and spent big on the likes of Hulk and Oscar in an effort to wrestle the CSL title from all-conquering Guangzhou Evergrande.

Stability in the dugout was key to SIPG's success, with former Porto and Munich 1860 boss Vitor Pereira a steadying influence since taking over the reigns in the close season from fellow Portuguese coach Andre Villas-Boas. Last season, a series of well-publicised spats between Villas-Boas and the Chinese football authorities over disciplinary matters, including an eight-match ban for Oscar, proved something of a distraction and contributed to the club ending the season empty-handed.

Exiting the AFC Champions League at the round-of-16 phase to the J-League's Kashima Antlers proved to be a blessing in disguise for Pereira as it allowed SIPG to focus on domestic issues. And the club's roots as an academy side also paid off in the shape of superior domestic talent. In addition to Wu Lei, goalkeeper Yan Junling, defender Wang Shenchao, plus midfielders Cai Huikang and Lu Wenjun made up the spine of the side. All have been capped by China, are at the peak of their careers and have been with the club since youth level.

Unlike SIPG, Guangzhou Evergrande's domestic talent has been acquired largely

Historic...Shanghai SIPG celebrate a first CSL title

Winner...Beijing Guoan's Yu Dabao beats Diego Tardelli of Shandong Luneng in the Cup Final

from other teams through financial muscle rather than developing it themselves. Additionally, their side is ageing – that their captain is 38-year-old Zheng Zhi tells its own story. Back in his second spell as coach, Fabio Cannavaro will face a big test next season in trying to rejuvenate one of the most successful club sides China has ever produced.

Elsewhere, matters off the pitch once again tarnished proceedings as the Chinese FA left clubs and players aghast with a series of draconian punishments for relatively minor infractions – such as the one-match ban handed to Shandong Luneng striker Diego Tardelli for scratching his face as he stood for the Chinese national anthem before a game against Shanghai SIPG in October.

Such incidents are widely considered by the Chinese football media to have undermined the integrity of the league, along with the decision to call up 55 under-25 players for a military-syle training camp in October just as the clubs were about to play vital late-season CSL matches.

External factors were responsible for further misfortune as Shanghai SIPG were denied a proper title party. Local police limited attendance at their final home game of the campaign to season-ticket holders only for "safety concerns", so just 20,000 fans filled the 60,000-capacity Shanghai Stadium. It was commonly believed that the fact president Xi Jinping was in the city at the same time for an international trade fair was the real reason behind the notoriously risk-averse security authorities' decision.

There was more positive news, however, as the CFA confirmed that a plan to field a national-development team in the CSL next season had been shelved.

And the season finished on a high for Beijing Guoan, who clinched their first trophy for nearly a decade, winning a two-legged CFA Cup Final against Shandong Luneng on away goals. WS

Season's best

Top scorer...Wu Lei

PLAYER OF THE YEAR
Wu Lei (Shanghai SIPG)
Became the first Chinese player to top the CSL scoring charts, getting 27 goals in 30 games.

COACH OF THE YEAR
Vitor Pereira (Shanghai SIPG)
Steered the club to their maiden CSL title and ended Guangzhou Evergrande's dominance.

NEWCOMER OF THE YEAR
Zhu Chenjie (Shanghai Shenhua)
The 18-year-old defender was the first player born in the new millennium to receive a call-up by China.

➤ two clubs as Raja lose 3-1 away to V Club of DR Congo but win 4-3 on aggregate.
SCOTLAND: Brendan Rodgers equals Walter Smith's record at Rangers in the 1990s by winning a seventh successive domestic trophy as Celtic beat Aberdeen 1-0 in the League Cup Final.
UEFA: It is announced that a third European club competition, with the working title "Europa League 2", will be introduced from 2021.
USA: Gregg Berhalter replaces interim boss Dave Sarachan as national coach.

Monday December 3

BALLON D'OR: Real Madrid and Croatia midfielder Luka Modric is the first player other than Lionel Messi or Cristiano Ronaldo to claim the award in more than a decade.
ENGLAND: Southampton part company with manager Mark Hughes, along with his assistants Mark Bowen and Eddie Niedzwiecki.
ITALY: Internazionale striker Mauro Icardi is named Serie A's Player of 2017-18 by the Italian Players' Association. Massimiliano Allegri wins the coach award and his Juventus side are voted best team.
SPAIN: Ex-Barcelona president Josep Lluis Nunez dies, aged 87.
UEFA: Hungary and Slovenia are both assured of a place at the Euro Under-21 Championship in 2021 after being confirmed as co-hosts.

Tuesday December 4

FRANCE: Paris Saint-Germain's home game against Montpellier and Toulouse v Lyon on Saturday are both postponed at the request of the police following violent protests in major French cities over the past three weekends against a rise in fuel tax. Monaco move out of the relegation zone as two Radamel Falcao penalties give them a 2-0 victory at Amiens.
SPAIN: Athletic Bilbao, who have not won in La Liga since the opening day of the season, sack coach Eduardo Berizzo following Monday's 3-0 loss at Levante and replace him with Gaizka Garitano.

Wednesday December 5

ENGLAND: Ralph Hasenhuttl becomes Southampton's fourth manager in two years.
ITALY: Former Arsenal chief executive Ivan Gazidis is confirmed as the new CEO of Milan.
PARAGUAY: Guarani beat Olimpia on penalties after a 2-2 draw in the Paraguayan Cup Final.
SCOTLAND: Kilmarnock go top ➤

➤ of the Scottish top flight for the first time in 20 years with a 2-0 victory over Livingston.
SPAIN: Diego Simeone's 400th game as coach of Atletico Madrid ends with a 4-0 victory over Sant Andreu in the Spanish Cup.
VENEZUELA: Antonio Romero gets a hat-trick as Apertura champions Zamora beat Clausura winners Deportivo Lara 4-0 to win the Serie Final 5-1 on aggregate.

Thursday December 6

ARGENTINA: Rosario Central draw 1-1 with Gimnasia La Plata and win on penalties in the Cup Final.
FRANCE: Monaco's game with Nice on Friday night becomes the third Ligue 1 fixture of the coming weekend to be called off due to recent protests across France.

Friday December 7

ITALY: Cesare Prandelli replaces Ivan Juric, who is sacked after Genoa's Italian Cup loss to third-tier Virtus Entella on Thursday. Luigi Radice, who led Torino to their last *Scudetto*, dies aged 83. Juventus beat Inter 1-0 in the *Derby d'Italia*.

Saturday December 8

ENGLAND: Liverpool win 4-0 at Bournemouth to go top of the table and are now the only unbeaten side in the Premier League this season after Manchester City lose 2-0 away at Chelsea.
GERMANY: Jadon Sancho scores the winner as Borussia Dortmund win 2-1 at Ruhr rivals Schalke to move nine points clear at the top of the Bundesliga.
SOUTH KOREA: Daegu collect their first silverware since being founded in 2002, beating Ulsan Hyundai 5-1 on aggregate in the Korean Cup Final.
SPAIN: Barcelona go three points clear at the top of La Liga by thrashing city rivals Espanyol 4-0.
USA: Atlanta United beat Portland Timbers 2-0 to win the MLS Cup for the first time.

Sunday December 9

INDONESIA: Persija Jakarta beat Mitra Kukar 2-1 to pip PSM Makassar to the title by a point.
JAPAN: Urawa Red Diamonds win the Emperor's Cup, beating Vegalta Sendai 1-0 in the Final.
LIBERTADORES CUP: River Plate beat Boca Juniors 3-1 in Madrid to win 5-3 on aggregate in the Final.

Monday December 10

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP: CAF says it will hold an extraordinary meeting on January 9 to choose new hosts for the 2019 finals.
SPAIN: Villarreal sack Javier Calleja and appoint Luis Garcia Plaza until the end of the season. Barcelona abandon plans to play a league fixture against Girona in Miami.

Tuesday December 11

AFF CHAMPIONSHIP: Malaysia come from two goals down to draw 2-2 with Vietnam in their home leg of the Final.
UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE: Lucas Moura's late goal earns Tottenham Hotspur a 1-1 draw away at Barcelona to edge out Internazionale and reach the last 16, where they are joined by Paris Saint-Germain and Liverpool.

Wednesday December 12

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: Ex-federation president Patrice-Edouard Ngaissona, who is a CAF committee member, is arrested on suspicion of committing war crimes.
CLUB WORLD CUP: Khalid Eisa saves two spot-kicks in the opening game of the tournament as UAE's Al Ain beat Team Wellington on penalties after coming from 3-0 down to draw 3-3.
ENGLAND: At 14 years and 314 days, Manchester United's Shola Shoretire becomes the youngest player ever to appear in the UEFA Youth League, coming on as a sub in a 2-1 win away to Valencia.
FRANCE: Rennes announce interim coach Julien Stephan will be in charge until the end of the season.
SPAIN: Real Madrid suffer their biggest-ever home defeat in Europe as they lose 3-0 to CSKA Moscow.
SUDAMERICANA CUP: After a 1-1 draw in both legs, Brazil's Atletico Paranaense beat Colombia's Junior on penalties in the Final.
UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE: Lyon draw 1-1 at Shakhtar Donetsk to become the final team through to the last 16.

Thursday December 13

AUSTRALIA: The A-League is to expand, with Western Melbourne entering the competition next season and Macarthur South West United joining in 2020.
ENGLAND: The FA confirm Martin Glenn will leave his role as FA chief executive in May 2019.
GREECE: Olympiakos beat Milan 3-1 to qualify for the Europa League knockout stage at the expense of the Italian side.
TUNISIA: Ex-France international Alain Giresse will start work as national coach on January 1. WS

Japan

MIKE PLASTOW

Kawasaki retain their title

Pace-setters Sanfrecce have to settle for second place

Gritty Kawasaki Frontale once again fought back from behind to retain the J.League title with two games to spare and a 12-point lead by the finish. For much of the campaign it looked as if nobody was going to catch early leaders Sanfrecce Hiroshima, only for Kawasaki to run away with the championship at the last.

"We had a hard time at the start," said Kawasaki manager Toru Oniki. "But the players never wavered. Our theme this season was to hold our shape and that is exactly what we did all season.

"I am relieved and very pleased that our consistency brought this result in the end."

Ever-present veteran Kengo Nakamura was again inspirational in midfield for a Kawasaki side that had the tightest defence in the league. The rapid pressing, swift counter attacks and sharp, rhythmical passing kept the pressure high all game and all season long.

Sanfrecce, who only avoided relegation by a single point in 2017, made all of the early running under new boss Hiroshi Jofuku, staying top for six months.

The turning point came in August when Kawasaki, still nine points behind in second place, fought back to win 2-1 in Hiroshima. Brazilian striker Patric gave the hosts the lead but Kawasaki skipper Yu Kobayashi scored twice to keep his team in the race. Sanfrecce didn't collapse immediately, winning their next two games, but then everything went wrong as they took just one point from the next seven games.

The championship had become a two-horse race by September as Tokyo, Cerezo Osaka, Hokkaido Consadole Sapporo and Vissel Kobe all dropped out of contention. Kawasaki overtook Sanfrecce on goal difference with six games to go and clinched the title on November 10 – the same day Kashima Antlers won the AFC Champions League.

A tight battle for the third automatic Champions League spot was won by the new Asian champions, who improved steadily throughout the second half of the season and will therefore – unlike 2017 winners Urawa Red Diamonds this term – be able to defend their continental title next season.

Urawa will be back in Asian action next term

Delight...Tatsuya Hasegawa of Kawasaki Frontale

after securing Japan's fourth and final Champions League slot with a 1-0 win over Vegalta Sendai in the Emperor's Cup Final. Urawa started the season weakly with no wins in their first five league games and sacked Champions League winning-manager Takafumi Hori in April. Their form recovered steadily under former Kashima boss Oswaldo de Oliveira; too late to challenge for the league but just in time for the cup.

It was a best-ever season for Sapporo under Mihailo Petrovic. Though never in the title race, they finished fourth, with Thai attacking midfielder Chanathip Songkrasin especially impressive.

The season was notable, too, for the arrival of some big-name players from abroad, with Andres Iniesta at Kobe and Fernando Torres at Sagan Tosu leading the way.

But while the fanfares were loud, the results were disappointing. Tosu, already caught up in a relegation battle, remained that way until the end of the season and only stayed up on goal difference as the third of five teams tied on 41 points.

Kobe were sixth when Iniesta arrived, 15 points behind leaders Sanfrecce but still hoping to qualify for the 2019 Asian Champions League. But for all his brilliance, the side lost its way after he arrived to the point of even toying with relegation. Kobe have announced the addition of David Villa next season to join up with Iniesta and Lukas Podolski.

V-Varen Nagasaki and Kashiwa Reysol filled the bottom two automatic relegation spots and will be replaced by J2 champions Matsumoto Yamaga and runners-up Oita Trinita next season. Third from bottom Jubilo Iwata stayed up thanks to a 2-0 win against Tokyo Verdy in the play-off.

Low-budget Shonan Bellmare celebrated their most recent return to top-flight football with a first major J.League trophy, the J.League Cup, beating near neighbours Yokohama F.Marinos 1-0 in the Final.

It was their first major trophy of any description since the AFC Cup-winners Cup in the days of Hidetoshi Nakata in 1995. That didn't spare them their perennial relegation battle, but their positive football was a joy to watch all season and they stayed up on goal difference.

With the money from live sports streaming service DAZN now flowing to the clubs and the J.League changing its rules to allow five foreign players on the pitch instead of three, Japanese football enters 2019 with expectations rising higher than in a good many years. WS

Struggle...Andres Iniesta (left) in action for Vissel Kobe against Sagan Tosu

Season's best

Back to back... Toru Oniki

PLAYER OF THE YEAR
Kengo Nakamura (Kawasaki Frontale)
The 38-year-old midfielder shows no signs of slowing down, and his vision and pinpoint passing again made the difference for Kawasaki.

MANAGER OF THE YEAR
Toru Oniki (Kawasaki Frontale)
Won back-to-back J.League championships with Kawasaki in his first two years as a club manager, matching current national boss Hajime Moriyasu's achievement at Sanfrecce Hiroshima in 2012 and 2013.

NEWCOMER OF THE YEAR
Hiroki Abe (Kashima Antlers)
The 19-year-old youth-international striker just out of high school played in both legs of the Champions League Final, clocked up 23 J.League games and ended his first year as a professional at the Club World Cup.

Internationals

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE

League A

Group A1

Nov16 - Rotterdam
Holland 2 (Wijnaldum 44, Depay pen 90+6)
France 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 44,366. **Ref:** Taylor (Eng)
Holland: Cillessen - Dumfries, De Ligt, Van Dijk, Blind, De Roon, F De Jong, Bergwijn (Promes 86), Wijnaldum (Vilhena 89), Babel (Ake 90+2), Depay.
France: Lloris - Pavard, Varane, Kimpembe, Digne, Kante, Nzonzi (Ndombele 81), Matuidi (Sissoko 65), Griezmann, Giroud (Dembele 65), Mbappe.

Nov19 - Gelsenkirchen
Germany 2 (Werner 9, Sane 20)
Holland 2 (Promes 85, Van Dijk 90+1)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 42,186. **Ref:** Hategan (Rom)
Germany: Neuer - Sule, Hummels, Rudiger, Kehrer, Kimmich, Kroos, Schulz, Gnabry (Muller 66), Werner (Reus 63), Sane (Goretzka 80).
Holland: Cillessen - Tete, De Ligt, Van Dijk, Blind, De Roon, F De Jong, Promes, Wijnaldum (Vilhena 60), Babel (Dilrosun 45; L De Jong 66), Depay.

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE – GROUP A1 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Holland (QF)	4	2	1	1	8	4	7
France	4	2	1	1	4	4	7
Germany (R)	4	0	2	2	3	7	2

Group A2

Nov15 - Brussels
Belgium 2 (Batshuayi 65, 81)
Iceland 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 28,891. **Ref:** Grinfeld (Isr)
Belgium: Courtois - Alderweireld, Kompany (Denayer 84), Boyata, Meunier, Tielemans, Witsel, T Hazard, Mertens (Januzaj 75), Batshuayi, E Hazard (Vanaken 75).
Iceland: Halldorsson - Skulason, Ingason, Arnason, Fjoluson, Magnusson, Palsson, Gunnarsson, Traustason, A Gudmundsson (Thorsteinsson 87), A Sigurdsson (Sigthorsson 63).

Nov18 - Lucerne
Switzerland 5 (Rodriguez pen 26, Seferovic 31, 44, 84, Elvedi 62)
Belgium 2 (T Hazard 2, 17)
HT: 3-2. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Orsato (Ita)
Switzerland: Sommer - Mbabu, Elvedi, Klose, Rodriguez, Fernandes, Xhaka, Freuler (Zakaria 79), Zuber (Benito 87), Shaqiri, Seferovic (Ajeti 90+2).
Belgium: Courtois - Alderweireld, Kompany, Boyata, Meunier (Origi 90), Tielemans, Witsel, Chadli (Batshuayi 65), T Hazard, E Hazard, Mertens.

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE – GROUP A2 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Switz'land (QF)	4	3	0	1	14	5	9
Belgium	4	3	0	1	9	6	9
Iceland (R)	4	0	0	4	1	13	0

Group A3

Nov17 - Milan
Italy 0
Portugal 0
Att: 73,000. **Ref:** Makkelie (Hol)
Italy: Donnarumma - Florenzi, Bonucci, Chiellini, Biraghi, Barella, Jorginho, Verratti (Pellegrini 81), Chiesa (Berardi 87), Immobile (Lasagna 74), Insigne.
Portugal: Rui Patricio - Joao Cancelo, Jose Fonte, Ruben Dias, Mario Rui, Pizzi (Joao Mario 68), William Carvalho, Ruben Neves, Bernardo Silva, Andre Silva (Danilo Pereira 90), Bruma (Raphael Guerreiro 85).

Nov 20 - Guimaraes
Portugal 1 (Andre Silva 34)
Poland 1 (Milik pen 66)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 29,917. **Ref:** Karasev (Rus)
Portugal: Beto - Joao Cancelo, Pepe, Ruben Dias, Kevin Rodrigues, Renato Sanches, Danilo Pereira, William Carvalho, Rafa Silva (Bruma 70), Andre Silva (Eder 87), Raphael Guerreiro (Joao Mario 61). *Sent off: Danilo Pereira 63.*
Poland: Szczesny - Kedziora, Cionek, Bednarek, Bereszynski, Klich (Goralski 75), Krychowiak, Grosicki (Kadzior 79), Zielinski (Szymanski 90+5), Frankowski, Milik.

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE – GROUP A3 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Portugal (QF)	4	2	2	0	5	3	8
Italy	4	1	2	1	2	2	5
Poland (R)	4	0	2	2	4	6	2

Group A4

Nov15 - Zagreb
Croatia 3 (Kramaric 54, Jedvaj 69, 90+3)
Spain 2 (Dani Ceballos 56, Sergio Ramos pen 78)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 33,018. **Ref:** Kulbakov (Bls)
Croatia: Kalinic - Vrsaljko, Lovren, Vida, Jedvaj, Modric, Brozovic, Rakitic (Vlasic 67), Kramaric (Pjaca 89), Rebic (Brekalo 73), Perisic.
Spain: De Gea - Sergi Roberto, Sergio Ramos, Inigo Martinez, Jordi Alba, Saul (Suso 74), Busquets, Dani Ceballos, Rodrigo (Marco Asensio 61), Iago Aspas (Morata 64), Isco.

Nov18 - London
England 2 (Lingard 78, Kane 85)
Croatia 1 (Kramaric 57)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 78,221. **Ref:** Sidiropoulos (Gre)
England: Pickford - Walker, Gomez, Stones, Chilwell, Barkley (Alli 64), Dier, Delph (Lingard 73), Sterling, Kane, Rashford (Sancho 73).
Croatia: Kalinic - Vrsaljko (Milic 26), Lovren, Vida, Jedvaj, Modric, Brozovic, Kramaric, Vlasic (Rog 79), Perisic, Rebic (Brekalo 46).

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE – GROUP A4 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
England (QF)	4	2	1	1	6	5	7
Spain	4	2	0	2	12	7	6
Croatia (R)	4	1	1	2	4	10	4

● *The 4 group winners have qualified for the Nations League finals (see fixtures, below)*
● *The countries placed bottom in the groups have been relegated to League B for the 2020 Nations League tournament*
● *The 4 countries with the best record in the League A group stage that do not qualify for the 2020 European Championship finals via the Euro 2020 qualifiers starting in March 2019 will go into play-offs - to be played in March 2020 - to try to win the one Euro 2020 finals place on offer via the League A play-offs route*

Finals

To be played in Portugal in 2019

Semi-finals

Jun 5 Portugal v Switzerland (*Porto*)
Jun 6 Holland v England (*Guimaraes*)

3rd-place match

Jun 9 *(Guimaraes)*

Final

Jun 9 *(Porto)*

League B

Group B1

Nov16 - Trnava
Slovakia 4 (Rusnak 6, Kucka 26, Zrelak 52, Mak 61)
Ukraine 1 (Konoplyanka 47)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 9,764. **Ref:** Dabanovic (Mne)
Slovakia: Dubravka - Pekarik, Skrtel, Skriniar, Hancko, Gregus, Rusnak, Kucka (Bero 30), Hamsik, Mak (Stoch 69), Zrelak (Duris 82).
Ukraine: Boyko - Karavaev, Kryvtsov (Plastun 14), Burda, Matviyenko, Stepanenko, Malinovskyi, Zinchenko, Konoplyanka (Shaparenko 65), Tsygankov, Boryachuk (Kovalenko 62).

Nov19 - Prague
Czech Republic 1 (Schick 32)
Slovakia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 16,623. **Ref:** Hernandez (Spa)
Czech Republic: Vaclik - Kaderabek, Celustka, Kalas, Novak, Soucek, Vydra (Gebre Selassie 64), Dockal, Pavelka, Jankto (Krejci 76), Schick (Dolezal 82).
Slovakia: Dubravka - Pekarik, Skrtel, Skriniar, Hancko, Bero, Gregus (Duda 58), Hamsik, Rusnak (Mak 58), Zrelak (Nemec 79), Stoch.

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE – GROUP B1 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ukraine (P)	4	3	0	1	5	5	9
Czech Rep	4	2	0	2	4	4	6
Slovakia (R)	4	1	0	3	5	5	3

Group B2

Nov17 - Konya
Turkey 0
Sweden 1 (Granqvist pen 71)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 37,425. **Ref:** Kovacs (Rom)
Turkey: Bolat - Mehmet Celik, Ayhan, Caglar, Kaldirim (Bayram 87), Okay, Cengiz, Mahmut (Irfan 72), Malli (Ozyakup 83), Calhanoglu, Tosun.
Sweden: Olsen - Lustig, Lindelof (Helander 46), Granqvist, Augustinsson, Sebastian Larsson, Johansson, Ekdal (Svensson 81), M Olsson, Berg, Claesson (Kiese Thelin 90).

Nov 20 - Stockholm
Sweden 2 (Lindelof 41, Berg 72)
Russia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 20,223. **Ref:** Bastien (Fra)
Sweden: Olsen - Lustig, Lindelof, Granqvist, Augustinsson, Sebastian Larsson, Johansson, K Olsson (Guidetti 89), M Olsson (Kiese Thelin 70), Berg, Claesson (Svensson 80).
Russia: Lunev - Ignatyev, Neustadter, Dzhikiya, Nababkin, Kuzyaev, Gazinsky, Ionov (Zabolotniy 69), Poloz (Kambolov 46), Erokhin (Ari 77), Dzyuba.

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE – GROUP B2 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sweden (P)	4	2	1	1	5	3	7
Russia	4	2	1	1	4	3	7
Turkey (R)	4	1	0	3	4	7	3

Group B3

Nov15 - Vienna
Austria 0
Bosnia-Herzegovina 0
Att: 37,200. **Ref:** Dallas (Sco)
Austria: Lindner - Lainer, Dragovic, Hinteregger, Alaba, Baumgartlinger, Zulj (Janko 82), Lazaro, Kainz (Schlager 46), Schopf (Gregoritsch 67), Arnautovic.
Bosnia-Herzegovina: Sehic - Vranjes, Sunjic, Zukanovic, Civic, Saric, Pjanic (Gojak 87), Besic, Visca, Dzeko, Duljevic (Krunic 79).

Nov18 - Belfast
Northern Ireland 1 (C Evans 57)
Austria 2 (Schlager 49, Lazaro 90+3)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 17,895. **Ref:** Lardot (Blg)
Northern Ireland: Carson - Smith, McAuley, J Evans, Dallas, C Evans (McNair 88), Davis, Saville, McGinn (Whyte 74), Boyce (Lafferty 74), Jones.
Austria: Lindner - Lainer, Dragovic, Hinteregger, Ulmer, Baumgartlinger, Ilsanker (Zulj 46), Lazaro, Schlager, Alaba, Gregoritsch (Arnautovic 71).

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE – GROUP B3 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bosnia-Herz (P)	4	3	1	0	5	1	10
Austria	4	2	1	1	3	2	7
N Ireland (R)	4	0	0	4	2	7	0

Group B4

Nov16 - Cardiff
Wales 1 (Bale 89)
Denmark 2 (N Jorgensen 42, Braithwaite 88)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 32,354. **Ref:** Kruzliak (Slk)
Wales: Hennessey - C Roberts, Chester (Ampadu 50), Williams, Dummett (Gunter 39), Brooks, Ramsey, Allen, T Lawrence, T Roberts (Wilson 68), Bale.
Denmark: Schmeichel - Dalsgaard, Christensen, M Jorgensen, J Larsen, Schone (Lerager 79), Delaney, Braithwaite, Eriksen, Poulsen, N Jorgensen (Dolberg 70).

Nov19 - Aarhus
Denmark 0
Republic of Ireland 0
Att: 11,130. **Ref:** Agayev (Aze)
Denmark: Ronnow - Ankersen, M Jorgensen, Bjelland, Knudsen, Schone, Hojbjerg, Braithwaite (Cornelius 78), Eriksen (Lerager 46), Poulsen (Gytkjaer 65), N Jorgensen.
Republic of Ireland: Randolph - Keogh, Duffy, K Long, Coleman, Christie, Hendrick, Brady (Robinson 65), Stevens, O'Dowda (Obafemi 80), O'Brien (Curtis 65).

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE – GROUP B4 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Denmark (P)	4	2	2	0	4	1	8
Wales	4	2	0	2	6	5	6
Rep Ireland (R)	4	0	2	2	1	5	2

● *The 4 group winners have been promoted to League A for the 2020 Nations League tournament*
● *The countries placed bottom in the groups have been relegated to League C for the 2020 Nations League tournament*
● *The 4 countries with the best record in the League B group stage that do not qualify for the 2020 European Championship finals via the Euro 2020 qualifiers starting in March 2019 will go into play-offs - to be played in March 2020 - to try to win the one Euro 2020 finals place on offer via the League B play-offs route*

League C

Group C1

Nov17 - Shkoder
Albania 0
Scotland 4 (Fraser 14, Fletcher pen 45+2, Forrest 55, 67)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 8,632. **Ref:** Bezborodov (Rus)
Albania: Berisha - Veseli, Gjimshiti (Dermaku 53), Mavraj, Binaku, Uzuni, Kace (Ismajli 27), Xhaka, Grezda, Memushaj, Manaj (Balaj 62). *Sent off: Mavraj 22.*
Scotland: A McGregor - Paterson, Bates, McKenna, Robertson, C McGregor, Forrest, Armstrong (McTominay 61), Christie, Fraser (Russell 72), Fletcher (Phillips 68).

Nov 20 - Glasgow
Scotland 3 (Forrest 34, 43, 64)
Israel 2 (Kayal 9, Zahavi 75)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 21,281. **Ref:** Welz (Ger)
Scotland: A McGregor - Paterson, Bates, McKenna, Robertson, Armstrong (Phillips 76), C McGregor, Christie (Shinnie 76), Forrest, Fletcher (McTominay 87), Fraser.
Israel: Harush - Yeini, Taha (Cohen 67), Ben Harush, Dasa, Peretz (Saba 73), Natcho, Kayal, Tawatha (Hemed 85), Dabbur, Zahavi.

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE – GROUP C1 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Scotland (P)	4	3	0	1	10	4	9
Israel	4	2	0	2	6	5	6
Albania	4	1	0	3	1	8	3

Group C2

Nov15 - Athens
Greece 1 (Granlund og 25)
Finland 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 6,376. **Ref:** Banti (Ita)
Greece: Vlachodimos - Torosidis, Manolas (Siovas 28), Papastathopoulos, Koutris, Zeca, Kourbelis, Mantalos, Fortounis, Pelkas (Bakasetas 84), Mitroglou (Koulouris 69).
Finland: Hradecky - Granlund, Toivio, Arajuuri, Uronen, Lod, Kamara, Kauko, Soiri (Jensen 74), Tuominen (Pirinen 83), Pukki (Lam 90+3).

Nov15 - Budapest
Hungary 2 (Orban 8, Szalai 69)
Estonia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 7,775. **Ref:** Jorgji (Alb)
Hungary: Dibusz - Barath, Orban, Kadar, Korhut, A Nagy, Patkai, D Nagy (Dzsudzsak 65), Kalmar (Kleinheisler 84), Kovacs, Szalai (Bode 76).
Estonia: Aksalu - Teniste, Vihmann, Tamm, Pikk, Dmitrijev, Antonov, Luts (Puri 77), Vassiljev (Purje 82), Ojamaa (Zenjov 60), Anier.

Nov18 - Athens
Greece 0
Estonia 1 (Lambropoulos og 44)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 5,179. **Ref:** Aranovskyi (Ukr)
Greece: Barkas - Bakakis (Torosidis 46), Papastathopoulos, Lambropoulos, Giannoulis, Samaris, Bouchalakis (Mantalos 71), Masouras (Fortounis 57), Zeca, Bakasetas, Karelis.
Estonia: Lepmets - Baranov, Vihmann, Tamm, Kams, Dmitrijev, Lepistu (Antonov 68), Kallaste, Luts, Zenjov (Pikk 81), Sappinen (Ojamaa 86).

Nov18 - Budapest
Hungary 2 (Szalai 29, A Nagy 37)
Finland 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 9,200. **Ref:** Vincic (Sln)
Hungary: Gulacsi - Barath (Lang 52), Orban, Kadar (Paulo Vinicius 46), Korhut (Holender 54), Kleinheisler, A Nagy, Kalmar, Lovrencsics, Szalai, Dzsudzsak.
Finland: Joronen - Granlund (Toivio 46), Arajuuri, Vaisanen, Uronen, Lod, Lam (Kauko 60), Kamara, Taylor (Forsell 74), Tuominen, Pukki.

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE – GROUP C2 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Finland (P)	6	4	0	2	5	3	12
Hungary	6	3	1	2	9	6	10
Greece	6	3	0	3	4	5	9
Estonia (R)	6	1	1	4	4	8	4

Group C3

Nov16 - Nicosia
Cyprus 1 (Zachariou 24)
Bulgaria 1 (Dimitrov pen 89)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 3,844. **Ref:** Al Hakim (Swe)
Cyprus: Panayi - Kousoulos, Merkis, Laifis, Margaca, Artymatas, Kyriakou, Makris, Efrem (Papafotis 78), Avraam (Ioannou 59), Zachariou (Roushias 67).
Bulgaria: Petkov - S Popov, Bodurov, Bozhikov, Nedyalkov, Nedelev, Kostadinov, Slavchev (Kostov 82), Ivanov (Dimitrov 56), I Popov, Kraev (Delev 56).

Nov16 - Ljubljana
Slovenia 1 (Verbic 9)
Norway 1 (Johnsen 85)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 10,254. **Ref:** Buquet (Fra)
Slovenia: Belec - Skubic, Aljaz Struna, Mevlja, Andraz Struna, Crnigoj (Bezjak 58), Rotman, Dervisevic, Verbic, Zajc (Beric 69), Sporar (Bijol 84).
Norway: Jarstein - Elabdellaoui, Nordtveit, Rosted, Aleesami, S Johansen (Odegaard 57), Henriksen, Selnaes, M Elyounoussi, T Elyounoussi (Johnsen 63), Kamara (Sorloth 75).

Nov19 - Sofia
Bulgaria 1 (Ivanov 68)
Slovenia 1 (Zajc 75)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 3,092. **Ref:** Gocek (Tur)
Bulgaria: Petkov - S Popov, Bodurov, Bozhikov, Nedyalkov, Dimitrov (Ivanov 64), Kostadinov, Slavchev, Delev (Zanev 72), I Popov, Kostov (Vasilev 59).
Slovenia: Belec - Skubic, Blazic, Mevlja, Andraz Struna, Zajc (Stulac 87), Dervisevic (Bijol 57), Rotman, Bezjak, Ilicic, Verbic (Pozeg 72).

Nov19 - Nicosia
Cyprus 0
Norway 2 (Kamara 36, 48)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 1,513. **Ref:** Vad (Hun)
Cyprus: Panayi - Merkis, Sielis, Laifis, Kousoulos, Artymatas, Kyriakou (Fylaktou 78), Ioannou, Kastanos, Avraam (Efrem 61), Zachariou (Makris 84). *Sent off: Sielis 80.*
Norway: Jarstein - Elabdellaoui, Nordtveit, Rosted, Meling, Fossum (Odegaard 45), Henriksen, Selnaes, M Elyounoussi, Kamara (Berge 90+2), T Elyounoussi (Sorloth 71).
Sent off: M Elyounoussi 90.

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE – GROUP C3 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Norway (P)	6	4	1	1	7	2	13
Bulgaria	6	3	2	1	7	5	11
Cyprus (R)	6	1	2	3	5	9	5
Slovenia (R)	6	0	3	3	5	8	3

Group C4

Nov17 - Ploiesti
Romania 3 (Puscas 7, Keseru 47, Stanciu 65)
Lithuania 0
HT: 1-0. *Played behind closed doors.*
Ref: Guida (Ita)
Romania: Tatarusanu - Benzar, Sapunaru, Moti, Bancu, Stanciu (Cicaldau 72), Anton, Chipciu (Deac 64), Keseru (Hagi 68), Maxim, Puscas.
Lithuania: Setkus - Baravykas, Girdvainis, Zulpa, Vaitkunas, Simkus (Slivka 65), Vorobjovas, Petravicius (Kazlauskas 80), Sirgedas, Novikovas, Cernych (Sernas 73).
Sent off: Novikovas 88.

Nov17 - Belgrade
Serbia 2 (Ljajic 30, Mitrovic 32)
Montenegro 1 (Mugosa 70)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 15,416. **Ref:** Undiano Mallenco (Spa)
Serbia: Rajkovic - Rukavina, Milenkovic, Veljkovic, Kolarov, Matic, Maksimovic, Tadic, Ljajic (Radonjic 90+2), Gacinovic (Lukic 71), Mitrovic (Jovic 83).
Montenegro: Petkovic - Marusic, Kopitovic, Simic, Vesovic, Scekic (Boljevic 46), Kosovic, Jankovic (Djordjevic 82), Ivanic, Jovovic, Mugosa.

Nov 20 - Podgorica
Montenegro 0
Romania 1 (Tucudean 44)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 3,574. **Ref:** Zwayer (Ger)
Montenegro: Petkovic - Marusic (Klimenta 87), Kopitovic, Simic, Vesovic, Jankovic (Djordjevic 81), Ivanic, Kosovic, Jovovic, Beciraj (Boljevic 64), Mugosa.
Romania: Tatarusanu - Manea, Sapunaru, Moti, Tosca, Anton, Stanciu, Chipciu (Deac 82), Keseru (Baluta 88), Maxim, Tucudean (Puscas 74).

Nov 20 - Belgrade
Serbia 4 (Zulpa og 51, Mitrovic 58, Prijovic 71, Ljajic 74)
Lithuania 1 (Petravicius 64)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 2,088. **Ref:** Tohver (Est)
Serbia: Rajkovic - Rukavina, Milenkovic, Veljkovic, Rodic, Maksimovic, Lukic (Fejsa 77), Zivkovic, Ljajic (Aleksic 82), Gacinovic (Prijovic 46), Mitrovic.
Lithuania: Setkus - Baravykas, Janusevskis, Girdvainis, Slavickas, Zulpa (Jankauskas 86), Petravicius, Vorobjovas (Matulevicius 69), Sirgedas, Kazlauskas (Sernas 59), Cernych.

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE – GROUP C4 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Serbia (P)	6	4	2	0	11	4	14
Romania	6	3	3	0	8	3	12
Montenegro	6	2	1	3	7	6	7
Lithuania (R)	6	0	0	6	3	16	0

● *The 4 group winners have been promoted to League B for the 2020 Nations League tournament*
● *The countries placed bottom in groups C2, C3 & C4, plus the lowest-ranked 3rd-placed team from groups C1, C2, C3 & C4 (based on their results against the1st & 2nd-placed countries in their respective groups), have been relegated to League D for the 2020 Nations League tournament*
● *The 4 countries with the best record in the League C group stage that do not qualify for the 2020 European Championship finals via the Euro 2020 qualifiers starting in March 2019 will go into play-offs - to be played in March 2020 - to try to win the one Euro 2020 finals place on offer via the League C play-offs route*

League D

Group D1

Nov15 - Andorra la Vella
Andorra 1 (C Martinez 63)
Georgia 1 (Chakvetadze 9)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 1,311. **Ref:** Petrescu (Rom)

Nov15 - Astana
Kazakhstan 1 (Suyumbayev 37)
Latvia 1 (Rakels 49)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 21,463. **Ref:** Maae (Den)

Nov19 - Andorra la Vella
Andorra 0
Latvia 0
Att: 1,021. **Ref:** Meler (Tur)
Sent off: Sabala (Latvia) 38

Nov19 - Tbilisi
Georgia 2 (Merebashvili 59, Chakvetadze 84)
Kazakhstan 1 (Omirtayev 90)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 52,220. **Ref:** Martins (Por)

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE – GROUP D1 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Georgia (P)	6	5	1	0	12	2	16
Kazakhstan	6	1	3	2	8	7	6
Latvia	6	0	4	2	2	6	4
Andorra	6	0	4	2	2	9	4

Group D2

Nov15 - Luxembourg
Luxembourg 0
Belarus 2 (Dragun 37, 54)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 4,533. **Ref:** Gozubuyuk (Hol)

Nov15 - Serravalle
San Marino 0
Moldova 1 (Damascan 78)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 747. **Ref:** Kominis (Gre)

Nov18 - Chisinau
Moldova 1 (Ginsari pen 58)
Luxembourg 1 (Bensi 70)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 4,642. **Ref:** Jaccottet (Swi)

Nov18 - Serravalle
San Marino 0
Belarus 2 (Dragun 8, Saroka 52)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 736. **Ref:** Kruashvili (Geo)

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE – GROUP D2 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Belarus (P)	6	4	2	0	10	0	14
Luxembourg	6	3	1	2	11	4	10
Moldova	6	2	3	1	4	5	9
San Marino	6	0	0	6	0	16	0

Group D3

Nov17 - Baku
Azerbaijan 2 (Nazarov 18, Madatov 28)
Faroe Islands 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 12,653. **Ref:** Masias (Cyp)

Nov17 - Valletta
Malta 0
Kosovo 5 (Muriqi 15, Kololli 70, Avdijaj 78, 80, Rashica 86)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 2,115. **Ref:** Frankowski (Pol)

Nov 20 - Pristina
Kosovo 4 (Zeneli 2, 50, 76, Rrahmani 61)
Azerbaijan 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 12,532. **Ref:** Millot (Fra)

Nov 20 - Valletta
Malta 1 (Corbalan 4)
Faroe Islands 1 (R Joensen 3)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 2,152. **Ref:** Meshkov (Rus)

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE – GROUP D3 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Kosovo (P)	6	4	2	0	15	2	14
Azerbaijan	6	2	3	1	7	6	9
Faroe Islands	6	1	2	3	5	10	5
Malta	6	0	3	3	5	14	3

Group D4

Nov16 - Gibraltar
Gibraltar 2 (De Barr 10, Priestley 78)
Armenia 6 (Movsisyan 27, 48, 52, 54, Kartashyan 66, Karapetyan 90+4)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 1,955. **Ref:** Steen (Nor)

Nov16 - Vaduz
Liechtenstein 0
Macedonia 2 (Bardhi 53, Nestorovski 90+1)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 2,116. **Ref:** Ardeleanu (CzR)
Sent off: Wieser (Liechtenstein) 50

Nov19 - Vaduz
Liechtenstein 2 (M Buchel 44, Hasler 47)
Armenia 2 (Adamyan 9, Karapetyan 85)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 1,166. **Ref:** Durieux (Lux)

Nov19 - Skopje
Macedonia 4 (Bardhi 27, Nestorovski 67, 80, Trajkovski 90+2)
Gibraltar 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 2,152. **Ref:** Sakhi (Kaz)

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE – GROUP D4 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Macedonia (P)	6	5	0	1	14	5	15
Armenia	6	3	1	2	14	8	10
Gibraltar	6	2	0	4	5	15	6
Liechtenstein	6	1	1	4	7	12	4

● *The 4 group winners have been promoted to League C for the 2020 Nations League tournament*
● *The 4 countries with the best record in the League D group stage that do not qualify for the 2020 European Championship finals via the Euro 2020 qualifiers starting in March 2019 will go into play-offs - to be played in March 2020 - to try to win the one Euro 2020 finals place on offer via the League D play-offs route*

EURO 2020 QUALIFIERS

Draw

Gp A Bulgaria, Czech Republic, England, Kosovo, Montenegro
Gp B Lithuania, Luxembourg, Portugal, Serbia, Ukraine
Gp C Belarus, Estonia, Germany, Holland, Northern Ireland
Gp D Denmark, Georgia, Gibraltar, Republic of Ireland, Switzerland
Gp E Azerbaijan, Croatia, Hungary, Slovakia, Wales
Gp F Faroe Islands, Malta, Norway, Romania, Spain, Sweden
Gp G Austria, Israel, Latvia, Macedonia, Poland, Slovenia
Gp H Albania, Andorra, France, Iceland, Moldova, Turkey
Gp I Belgium, Cyprus, Kazakhstan, Russia, San Marino, Scotland
Gp J Armenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Finland, Greece, Italy, Liechtenstein
Matches to be played March to November 2019

● *The top 2 in each of the10 groups will qualify for the 24-team Euro 2020 finals; the 4 remaining berths will be taken by the winners of the 4 UEFA Nations League play-off finals (1 for each of the Leagues, A, B, C & D)*

2019 AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS

Remaining fixtures (all March 2019) are listed under the respective tables

Group A

Nov17 - Bata
Equatorial Guinea 0
Senegal 1 (Meseguer og 52)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** El Banna (Egy)

Nov18 - Antananarivo
Madagascar 1 (Andriamahitsinoro 77)
Sudan 3 (Musa Idris 2, Abdalla 61, Mozamil 85)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Tessema (Eth)

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Senegal (QF)	5	4	1	0	10	2	13
Madag'car (QF)	5	3	1	1	8	6	10
Equat Guinea	5	1	0	4	1	6	3
Sudan	5	1	0	4	4	9	3

Senegal v Madagascar; Sudan v Equatorial Guinea

Group B

Nov16 - Casablanca
Morocco 2 (Ziyech pen 54, 66)
Cameroon 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Otogo-Castane (Gab)
Sent off: Toko Ekambi (Cameroon) 80

Nov17 - Moroni
Comoros 2 (Ben Nabouhane 2, Chamed 67)
Malawi 1 (P Phiri 65)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Hakizimana (Rwa)

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Morocco (QF)	5	3	1	1	8	3	10
Cameroon (QF)[1]	5	2	2	1	3	3	8
Comoros	5	1	2	2	5	6	5
Malawi	5	1	1	3	2	6	4

Cameroon v Comoros; Malawi v Morocco
[1]Qualified for finals as tournament hosts

Group C

Nov16 - Juba
South Sudan 2 (Lual 13, Aboy 63)
Burundi 5 (Abdul Razak 16, 76, 85, 87, Amissi 41)
HT: 1-2. **Ref:** Djama (Dji)

Nov17 - Libreville
Gabon 0
Mali 1 (Doumbia 11)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Mohamed (Sud)

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GROUP C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Mali (QF)	5	3	2	0	7	2	11
Burundi	5	2	3	0	10	4	9
Gabon	5	2	1	2	6	4	7
South Sudan	5	0	0	5	2	15	0

Burundi v Gabon; Mali v South Sudan

Group D

Nov17 - Bakau
Gambia 3 (L Jallow 70, B Jobe 78, A Jallow 90+4)
Benin 1 (Mounie 34)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Selmi (Tun)

Nov18 - Lome
Togo 1 (Laba 55)
Algeria 4 (Mahrez 13, 30, Attal 28, Bounedjah 90+2)
HT: 0-3. **Ref:** Omweno (Ken)

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GROUP D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Algeria (QF)	5	3	1	1	8	3	10
Benin	5	2	1	2	3	5	7
Togo	5	1	2	2	3	6	5
Gambia	5	1	2	2	5	5	5

Algeria v Gambia; Benin v Togo

Group E

Nov17 - Victoria
Seychelles 1 (Monnaie 71)
Libya 8 (Sabbou 3, Saltou 20, 32, 62, Al Maryami 56, Salem Roma 58, Al Shadi 85, Elhouni 90+2)
HT: 0-3. **Ref:** Adelaid (Com)

Nov17 - Johannesburg
South Africa 1 (Mothiba 26)
Nigeria 1 (Mkhwanazi og 9)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Gassama (Gam)

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GROUP E	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nigeria (QF)	5	3	1	1	11	5	10
South Africa	5	2	3	0	9	1	9
Libya	5	2	1	2	15	9	7
Seychelles	5	0	1	4	2	22	1

Libya v South Africa; Nigeria v Seychelles

Group F

Nov18 - Addis Ababa
Ethiopia 0
Ghana 2 (J Ayew 3, pen 24)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Ghorbal (Alg)

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GROUP F	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Kenya (QF)	3	2	1	0	4	0	7
Ghana (QF)	3	2	0	1	7	1	6
Ethiopia	4	0	1	3	0	10	1

Ghana v Kenya
● *Sierra Leone expelled from tournament after FIFA suspended the FA; results annulled*

Group G

Nov18 - Brazzaville
Congo 1 (Bifouma 38)
DR Congo 1 (Kasongo 25)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Alioum (Cam)

Nov18 - Monrovia
Liberia 1 (Jebor 72)
Zimbabwe 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** N'Diaye (Sen)

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GROUP G	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Zimbabwe	5	2	2	1	7	4	8
Liberia	5	2	1	2	5	8	7
DR Congo	5	1	3	1	7	6	6
Congo	5	1	2	2	7	8	5

DR Congo v Liberia; Zimbabwe v Congo

Group H

Nov18 - Conakry
Guinea 1 (Yattara 11)
Ivory Coast 1 (Seri 21)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Jiyed (Mor)

Nov18 - Butare
Rwanda 2 (Tuyisenge 12, 45)
Central African Republic 2 (Habibou 27, Kondogbia 90+3)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Traore (Mli)

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GROUP H	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Guinea (QF)	5	3	2	0	8	4	11
Ivory C'st (QF)	5	2	2	1	9	5	8
Cent Af Rep	5	1	2	2	4	8	5
Rwanda	5	0	2	3	5	9	2

Central African Republic v Guinea; Ivory Coast v Rwanda

Group I

Nov18 - Luanda
Angola 2 (Mateus 45+1, 57)
Burkina Faso 1 (Dayo 69)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Ngambo (DRC)

Nov18 - Nouakchott
Mauritania 2 (Diakite 20, 84)
Botswana 1 (Kobe 4)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Hagi (Som)

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GROUP I	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Mauritania (QF)	5	4	0	1	7	5	12
Angola	5	3	0	2	8	6	9
Burkina Faso	5	2	1	2	7	5	7
Botswana	5	0	1	4	1	7	1

Botswana v Angola; Burkina Faso v Mauritania

Group J

Nov16 - Alexandria
Egypt 3 (Trezeguet 32, Elmohamady 60, Salah 90)
Tunisia 2 (Sliti 13, 72)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Gomes (SAf)

Nov18 - Manzini
Eswatini (Swaziland) 1 (Nkambule 20)
Niger 2 (Adebayor 54, 76)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Heeralall (Mrs)

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GROUP J	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tunisia (QF)	5	4	0	1	8	4	12
Egypt (QF)	5	4	0	1	15	4	12
Niger	5	1	1	3	3	10	4
Eswatini	5	0	1	4	2	10	1

Niger v Egypt; Tunisia v Eswatini (Swaziland)

Group K

Nov17 - Windhoek
Namibia 0
Guinea-Bissau 0
Ref: El Jaafari (Mor)

Nov18 - Maputo
Mozambique 1 (Reginaldo 63)
Zambia 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Bondo (Bot)

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GROUP K	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Guinea-Bissau	5	2	2	1	6	5	8
Namibia	5	2	2	1	4	3	8
Mozambique	5	2	1	2	5	5	7
Zambia	5	1	1	3	4	6	4

Guinea-Bissau v Mozambique; Zambia v Namibia

Group L

Nov17 - Kampala
Uganda 1 (Kaddu 78)
Cape Verde Islands 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Essrayri (Tun)

Nov18 - Maseru
Lesotho 1 (Lerotholi 76)
Tanzania 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Nkurunziza (Bdi)

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP QUALS – GROUP L	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Uganda (QF)	5	4	1	0	7	0	13
Lesotho	5	1	2	2	3	7	5
Tanzania	5	1	2	2	3	5	5
Cape Verde Is	5	1	1	3	4	5	4

Cape Verde Islands v Lesotho; Tanzania v Uganda

● *The top 2 in each of the12 groups will qualify for the 24-team finals. Finals hosts Cameroon qualified automatically, regardless of the fact that they are taking part in the qualifying tournament*

CONCACAF NATIONS LEAGUE QUALS

3rd matchday

Nov16 - Willemstad, Curacao
Aruba 0
Montserrat 2 (Weir-Daley 36, Woods-Garness 51)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Dolaini (Sur)

Nov16 - Belmopan
Belize 1 (Casey 31)
Puerto Rico 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Sandoval (Nic)

Nov16 - Hamilton
Bermuda 1 (Wells 71)
El Salvador 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Anderson (PR)

Nov16 - St George's
Grenada 5 (J Charles 15, 21, Hinkson 40, Paterson 49, 84)
Saint-Martin 2 (Joachim 45, Cocks 62)
HT: 3-1. **Ref:** De Leca (Aru)

Nov17 - George Town
Cayman Islands 0
St Lucia 0
Ref: Martinez (Cub)

Nov17 - Havana
Cuba 1 (Santa Cruz 83)
Dominican Republic 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Moore (Guy)

Nov17 - Montego Bay
Jamaica 2 (Burke 7, Mattocks pen 16)
Surinam 1 (D Fer 36)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Bassue (SKN)

Nov17 - Managua
Nicaragua 0
Haiti 2 (Cantave 12, Etienne 31)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Fischer (Can)
Sent off: Guerrier (Haiti) 16

Nov18 - Nassau
Bahamas 1 (Jean 62)
Anguilla 1 (Rogers 30)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Martinez (ESv)

Nov18 - Bridgetown
Barbados 3 (Holligan 25, Sargeant 80, Harte 89)
US Virgin Islands 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Reyna (Gtm)

Nov18 - Basseterre
St Kitts & Nevis 0
Canada 1 (Hutchinson 44)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Morrison (Jam)

Nov18 - Providenciales
Turks & Caicos Islands 3 (Forbes 7, 43, Francois 89)
St Vincent & The Grenadines 2 (Sutherland 86, McBurnette 88)
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Delsol (Dca)

Nov19 - Willemstad
Curacao 6 (Nepomuceno 39, 61, Hooi 58, 79, Janga 77, 90)
Guadeloupe 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Herrera (ESv)

Nov19 - Fort-de-France
Martinique 4 (Abaul 12, Cretinoir 23, Jougon 25, Parsemain 43)
Antigua & Barbuda 2 (Weston 17, Griffith 90+1)
HT: 4-1. **Ref:** Unkel (USA)

Nov 20 - Cayenne
French Guiana 2 (Haabo 18, 46)
Guyana 1 (Danns 59)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Elie (Hai)

Nov 20 - The Valley, Anguilla
Sint Maarten 0
Dominica 2 (Wade 6, R Peltier 52)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Santander (Mex)

CONCACAF NATIONS LEAGUE QUALIFIERS	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Curacao	3	3	0	0	21	0	9
Haiti	3	3	0	0	17	1	9
Canada	3	3	0	0	14	0	9
Cuba	3	3	0	0	14	0	9
Jamaica	3	3	0	0	12	1	9
Martinique	3	3	0	0	9	2	9
Bermuda	3	2	0	1	14	3	6
St Kitts & Nevis	3	2	0	1	11	1	6
Dominican Rep	3	2	0	1	8	1	6
Nicaragua	3	2	0	1	8	2	6
French Guiana	3	2	0	1	7	2	6
Belize	3	2	0	1	5	1	6
El Salvador	3	2	0	1	5	2	6
Montserrat	3	2	0	1	4	2	6
Guyana	3	1	1	1	11	4	4
Surinam	3	1	1	1	6	2	4
St Lucia	3	1	1	1	4	2	4
Barbados	3	1	1	1	5	5	4
Aruba	3	1	1	1	3	3	4
Guadeloupe	3	1	1	1	3	6	4
Dominica	3	1	1	1	2	5	4
Antigua & B'da	3	1	0	2	8	7	3
St Vincent & G	2	1	0	2	3	5	3
Grenada	3	1	0	2	5	14	3
Turks & Caicos	3	1	0	2	3	21	3
Cayman Is	3	0	1	2	0	7	1
Bahamas	3	0	1	2	1	11	1
Anguilla	3	0	1	2	1	12	1
Puerto Rico	3	0	0	3	0	3	0
British Virgin Is	2	0	0	2	0	9	0
Bonaire	2	0	0	2	0	11	0
Saint-Martin	3	0	0	3	2	18	0
US Virgin Is	3	0	0	3	0	16	0
Sint Maarten	3	0	0	3	0	27	0

4th matchday: March 2019

● *Each country will play 4 games in the qualifying stage (2 home, 2 away), the results being used to compile a league table of all 34 competing countries*
● *The top 6 in the final table will participate in League A of the 2019-20 CONCACAF Nations League competition, alongside the 6 countries that participated in the final round of CONCACAF's 2018 World Cup qualifiers (Costa Rica, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Trinidad & Tobago and United States), who qualified automatically for League A of the Nations League competition*
● *The next16 in the final table will participate in League B of the 2019-20 CONCACAF Nations League competition*
● *The bottom12 in the final table will participate in League C of the 2019-20 CONCACAF Nations League competition*
● *In addition, the top10 in the final table will qualify for the 2019 CONCACAF Gold Cup, joining direct entrants Costa Rica, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Trinidad & Tobago and United States*

AFF CHAMPIONSHIP FINALS

(ASEAN Football Federation)

Group A

Nov 8 - Phnom Penh
Cambodia 0
Malaysia 1 (Norshahrul 31)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 34,250. **Ref:** Al Badowe (Sin)

Nov 8 - Vientiane
Laos 0
Vietnam 3 (Nguyen Cong Phuong 11, Nguyen Anh Duc 45+2, Nguyen Quang Hai 68)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Alkatiri (Ins)

Nov12 - Mandalay
Myanmar 4 (Hlaing Bo Bo 60, 90+3, Than Htet Aung 70, Sithu Aung 87)
Cambodia 1 (Vathanaka 23)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 26,946. **Ref:** Daypuyat (Phi)

Nov12 - Kuala Lumpur
Malaysia 3 (Zaquan 15, Norshahrul 86, 90+2)
Laos 1 (Kongmathilath 7)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 12,127. **Ref:** Pu-Udom (Tha)

Nov16 - Vientiane
Laos 1 (Innalay 14)
Myanmar 3 (Aung Thu 45, Htet Phyo Wai 72, Maung Maung Lwin 85)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 1,294. **Ref:** Kim Hee-gon (SKo)

Nov16 - Hanoi
Vietnam 2 (Nguyen Cong Phuong 11, Nguyen Anh Duc 60)
Malaysia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 40,000. **Ref:** Al Khudayr (Sau)

Nov 20 - Yangon
Myanmar 0
Vietnam 0
Att: 29,954. **Ref:** Al Marri (Qat)

Nov 20 - Phnom Penh
Cambodia 3 (Vathanaka 18, Mony Udom pen 35, Sokpheng 77)
Laos 1 (Keohanam 76)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 25,085. **Ref:** Chan (Sin)

Nov 24 - Hanoi
Vietnam 3 (Nguyen Tien Linh 39, Nguyen Quang Hai 41, Phan Van Duc 61)
Cambodia 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 14,000. **Ref:** Ma (Chn)

Nov 24 - Kuala Lumpur
Malaysia 3 (Norshahrul 26, Zaquan pen 45+3, 88)
Myanmar 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 83,777. **Ref:** Faghani (Irn)

AFF CHAMPIONSHIP FINALS – GROUP A	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Vietnam (Q)	4	3	1	0	8	0	10
Malaysia (Q)	4	3	0	1	7	3	9
Myanmar	4	2	1	1	7	5	7
Cambodia	4	1	0	3	4	9	3
Laos	4	0	0	4	3	12	0

Group B

Nov 9 - Bangkok, Thailand
East Timor 0
Thailand 7 (Adisak 3, 13, 31, 45, 50, pen 57, Supachai 90+1)
HT: 0-4. **Att:** 8,764. **Ref:** Nasaruddin (Mly)
Sent off: Aderito (East Timor) 73

Nov 9 - Singapore
Singapore 1 (Hariss 37)
Indonesia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 30,783.
Ref: Nguyen Hien Triet (Vie)
Sent off: Putu Gede (Indonesia) 90+4

Nov13 - Jakarta
Indonesia 3 (Alfath 61, Lilipaly pen 69, Beto 82)
East Timor 1 (Rufino 48)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 15,138. **Ref:** Asimov (Uzb)

Nov13 - Bacolod
Philippines 1 (Reichelt 78)
Singapore 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 4,327. **Ref:** Shukri (Mly)

Nov17 - Bangkok
Thailand 4 (Korrakot 38, Pansa 45+2, Adisak 65, Pokklaw 74)
Indonesia 2 (Zulfiandi 29, Fachrudin 89)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 37,570. **Ref:** Yaacob (Mly)

Nov17 - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
East Timor 2 (Nataniel pen 73, Joao Pedro 75)
Philippines 3 (P Younghusband 27, Steuble 33, De Murga 68)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 312. **Ref:** Zainuddin (Bru)

Nov 21 - Bacolod
Philippines 1 (Bedic 81)
Thailand 1 (Supachai 57)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 3,522. **Ref:** A N Mohamed (Mly)

Nov 21 - Singapore
Singapore 6 (Safuwan 12, 19, 90+2, Ikhsan 30, 42, Faris 90)
East Timor 1 (Rufino 13)
HT: 4-1. **Att:** 18,408. **Ref:** Yaacob (Mly)

Nov 25 - Bangkok
Thailand 3 (Pansa 13, Supachai 23, Adisak 90)
Singapore 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 29,763. **Ref:** Al Ali (Jor)

Nov 25 - Jakarta
Indonesia 0
Philippines 0
Att: 15,436. **Ref:** Fu (Chn)

AFF CHAMPIONSHIP FINALS – GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Thailand (Q)	4	3	1	0	15	3	10
Philippines (Q)	4	2	2	0	5	3	8
Singapore	4	2	0	2	7	5	6
Indonesia	4	1	1	2	5	6	4
East Timor	4	0	0	4	4	19	0

● *Top 2 in both groups qualified for semi-finals*

Semi-finals

1st legs

Dec1 - Kuala Lumpur
Malaysia 0
Thailand 0
Att: 87,545. **Ref:** Al Kaf (Oma)

Dec 2 - Bacolod
Philippines 1 (Reichelt 45+2)
Vietnam 2 (Nguyen Anh Duc 12, Phan Van Duc 48)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 5,489. **Ref:** Al Jassim (Qat)

2nd legs

Dec 5 - Bangkok
Thailand 2 (Irfan og 21, Pansa 63)
Malaysia 2 (Syahmi 28, Norshahrul 71)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 46,157. **Ref:** Makhadmeh (Jor)
Sent off: Syahmi (Malaysia) 90+4
Agg 2-2; Malaysia on away goals

Dec 6 - Hanoi
Vietnam 2 (Nguyen Quang Hai 83, Nguyen Cong Phuong 87)
Philippines 1 (J Younghusband 89)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 38,816. **Ref:** Kimura (Jap)
Vietnam 4-2 on agg

Final

1st leg

Dec11 - Kuala Lumpur
Malaysia 2 (Shahrul 36, Safawi 60)
Vietnam 2 (Nguyen Huy Hung 22, Pham Duc Huy 25)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 88,482. **Ref:** Beath (Aus)

2nd leg

Dec15 - Hanoi
Vietnam 1 (Nguyen Anh Duc 6)
Malaysia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 44,625. **Ref:** Faghani (Irn)
Sent off: Shahrul (Malaysia) 90+5
Vietnam 3-2 on agg

FRIENDLIES

Wednesday, November 14

Nov14 - Lugano
Switzerland 0
Qatar 1 (Akram Afif 86)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 4,170. **Ref:** Blom (Hol)
Switzerland: Mvogo - Lacroix, Schar, Benito, Lang (Mbabu 62), Zakaria (Sow 68), Xhaka (Fernandes 46), Freuler (Shaqiri 46), Zuber (Moubandje 46), Gavranovic (Ajeti 46), Fassnacht.
Qatar: Y Hassan - Pedro Miguel, Salman, Al Rawi, A Hassan, Khoukhi, Hatem (Boudiaf 69), Madibo (Al Hajri 62), Akram Afif (Awadh 90), Al Haidos (Alaaeldin 70), Almoez Ali (Ali Afif 87).

Nov14 - Port Vila
Vanuatu 0
New Caledonia 1 (Roine 14)
HT: 0-1

Thursday, November 15

Nov15 - London
England 3 (Lingard 25, Alexander-Arnold 27, Wilson 77)
United States 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 68,155. **Ref:** Gil Manzano (Spa)
England: Pickford (McCarthy 46) - Alexander-Arnold, Keane, Dunk, Chilwell (Dier 58), Winks (Loftus-Cheek 70), Delph, Alli (Henderson 58), Sancho, Wilson (Rashford 79), Lingard (Rooney 58).
United States: Guzan - Yedlin, Miazga, Brooks, Villafana (Moore 88), McKennie (Lletget 76), Trapp (Acosta 70), Pulisic, Green (Adams 62), Weah (Saief 76), Wood.

Nov15 - Leipzig
Germany 3 (Sane 8, Sule 25, Gnabry 40)
Russia 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 35,288. **Ref:** Scharer (Swi)
Germany: Neuer - Ginter, Sule, Rudiger (Tah 60), Kimmich, Kehrer, Hector (Schulz 70), Havertz (Rudy 65), Gnabry (Muller 73), Sane (Goretzka 77), Werner (Brandt 65).
Russia: Lunev - Nababkin (Semenov 78), Neustadter, Dzhikiya, Rausch (Kudryashov 72), Ionov (Poloz 75), Gazinsky, Kuzyaev (Kambolov 71), Erokhin, Aleksei Miranchuk (Anton Miranchuk 61), Ari (Zabolotniy 55).

Nov15 - Tehran
Iran 1 (Ansarifard 50)
Trinidad & Tobago 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Al Athbah (Qat)
Iran: H Hosseini - Ghafouri (Rezaeian 77), Hajsafi, Nourollahi, Kanaani, Shojaei (Dejagah 59), Cheshmi, Torabi (Moharrami 58), Rezaei, Amiri (Ebrahimi 59), Ansarifard (Gholizadeh 77).
Trinidad & Tobago: Phillip - J Jones (Cato 72), Hyland, Guerra (Muckette 62), Bateau, Peltier (Lee 82), Cyrus, A Jones, Lewis, Hodge, Paul.

Nov15 - Netanya
Israel 7 (Zahavi 5, Tawatha 27, Dabbur 37, 53, Saba 62, 79, Sahar pen 88)
Guatemala 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 5,900. **Ref:** Brisard (Fra)
Israel: Harush - Dasa, Taha (Tzedek 46), Yeini, Ben Harush, Tawatha (Glazer 55), Kayal (Solomon 55), Natcho (Micha 64), Peretz, Dabbur (Saba 55), Zahavi (Sahar 68).
Guatemala: Motta - Cabrera (Pineda 46), Samayoa, Moreira, Gallardo, Ceballos (Mejia 46), B De Leon, F De Leon (Soto 46), Betancourth (Galindo 46), Aguilar (Perez 58), Martinez (Macal 72).

Nov15 - Lima
Peru 0
Ecuador 2 (A Valencia 47, E Valencia 74)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 45,000. **Ref:** Gonzalez (Uru)
Peru: Gallese - Advincula, Ramos (Araujo 78), Abram, Trauco, Tapia (Aquino 65), Yotun (Polo 73), Carrillo (Gonzales 65), Farfan (Reyna 77), Flores, Ruidiaz (Benavente 46).
Ecuador: Dominguez - Paredes, Mina, Achilier, Caicedo, Gruezo, A Valencia (Renato Ibarra 81), Orejuela (Intriago 77), Mendez, Montero (Ayrton Preciado 36), E Valencia (Cifuente 83).

Nov15 - Gdansk
Poland 0
Czech Republic 1 (Jankto 52)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 34,783. **Ref:** Klossner (Swi)
Poland: Skorupski - Kedziora, Bednarek, Kaminski, Bereszynski, Frankowski (Blaszczykowski 63), Zielinski (Kadzior 69), Krychowiak, Klich, Grosicki (Milik 78), Lewandowski.
Czech Republic: Pavlenka - Kaderabek, Celustka, Brabec (Kalas 46), Novak, Dockal (Travnik 89), Soucek (Darida 46), Jankto (Skalak 66), Pavelka, Vydra (Gebre Selassie 66), Schick (Dolezal 78).

Nov15 - Dublin
Republic of Ireland 0
Northern Ireland 0
Att: 31,241. **Ref:** Vincic (Sln)
Republic of Ireland: Randolph - Lenihan (Christie 84), Duffy, Egan, Coleman, Hendrick, Whelan (Hourihane 36), Brady, McClean (Stevens 66), O'Dowda (Curtis 46), Robinson (Maguire 66; Hogan 79).
Northern Ireland: Peacock-Farrell - Smith (Ward 74), Cathcart, J Evans, Lewis, Davis, Whyte (Jones 61), C Evans (McNair 65), Saville, Dallas, Boyce (Lafferty 71).

Nov15 - Robina, Australia
Uzbekistan 0
Lebanon 0
Sent off: Khashimov (Uzbekistan) 59

Friday, November 16

Nov16 - Cordoba
Argentina 2 (Funes Mori 44, Brizuela og 83)
Mexico 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Ostojich (Uru)
Argentina: Marchesin - Funes Mori, Foyth, Tagliafico, Saravia, Lo Celso (Meza 67), Paredes (Gimenez 87), Acuna (Lamela 88), Dybala (Vazquez 72), Correa (De Paul 46), Martinez (Icardi 57).
Mexico: Ochoa - Rodriguez (Dominguez 46), Reyes, Araujo, Gallardo (Arteaga 46), Layun (Brizuela 79), Guemez, Gutierrez (Alvarado 74), Fabian (Guzman 46), Pulido (Zaldivar 46), Jimenez.

Nov16 - London, England
Brazil 1 (Neymar pen 76)
Uruguay 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Pawson (Eng)
Brazil: Alisson - Danilo, Marquinhos, Miranda, Filipe Luis, Arthur, Walace, Renato Augusto (Allan 59), Douglas Costa (Richarlison 67), Roberto Firmino, Neymar.
Uruguay: Campana - M Suarez (Lemos 81), Mendez, Caceres, Laxalt, Torreira, Bentancur, Vecino (Valverde 85), Pereiro (Rodriguez 77), L Suarez, Cavani.

Nov16 - Rancagua
Chile 2 (Vegas 70, Sanchez 90)
Costa Rica 3 (Waston 36, 59, Matarrita 64)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 13,000. **Ref:** Delfino (Arg)
Chile: Herrera - Isla (Bolados 75), Roco (Reyes 39), Maripan, Vegas (Sagal 75), Medel, Pulgar, Vidal, Fernandes (Opazo 46), Paredes (Castillo 65), Sanchez.
Costa Rica: Alvarado - Smith (Salinas 88), Gonzalez, Waston, Calvo, Matarrita (Mora 83), Ruiz (Cubero 69), Borges, Cruz (Flores 84), Campbell (Leal 83), McDonald (George 76).

Nov16 - Tegucigalpa
Honduras 1 (Lozano pen 75)
Panama 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 12,309. **Ref:** Cruz (CR)
Honduras: L Lopez - Beckeles (Crisanto 78), M Figueroa, H Figueroa, Izaguirre, Mejia (Flores 60), Acosta, Quioto (Leveron 80), Lozano (A Lopez 78), Elis (Chirinos 63), Bengtson (Rochez 68).
Panama: Calderon - Davis (Andrade 72), Escobar, Cummings, Murillo, Camargo, Godoy, Quintero (Martinez 60), Sanchez (Small 60), Rodriguez (Clarke 76), Blackburn (Arroyo 70).

Nov16 - Oita
Japan 1 (H Sakai 39)
Venezuela 1 (Rincon pen 81)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 33,364. **Ref:** Irmatov (Uzb)
Japan: Schmidt - H Sakai, Tomiyasu, Yoshida, Sasaki, Shibasaki, Endo, Doan (Sugimoto 77), Minamino (J Ito 77), Nakajima (Haraguchi 68), Osako (Kitagawa 68).
Venezuela: Romo - Rosales, Chancellor, Ferraresi, Mago (Anor 74), Rincon, Moreno (Savarino 90+5), Murillo (Gonzalez 65), Herrera (Romero 65), Machis (Cordova 85), Rondon (Martinez 65).

Nov16 - Muscat
Oman 1 (Al Khaldi 30)
Syria 1 (Kalfa 44)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Al Kuwari (Qat)

Nov16 - Al Ramm
Palestine 2 (Norambuena 36, Albadawi 76)
Pakistan 1 (Bashir 16)
HT: 1-1

Nov16 - Dammam
Saudi Arabia 1 (Ghareeb 33)
Yemen 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 7,000

Nov16 - Dubai
United Arab Emirates 0
Bolivia 0
Ref: Ashkanani (Kuw)

Saturday, November 17

Nov17 - Brisbane
Australia 1 (Luongo 90+4)
South Korea 1 (Hwang Ui-jo 22)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 32,922. **Ref:** Iida (Jap)
Australia: Ryan - Risdon, Sainsbury, Milligan, Behich, Mooy, Luongo, Leckie (Juric 85), Rogic, Kruse (Mabil 55), Maclaren (Boyle 71).
South Korea: Kim Seung-gyu - Lee Yong, Kim Min-jae (Jung Seung-hyun 85), Kim Young-gwon, Hong Chul, Koo Ja-cheol (Ju Se-jong 45), Hwang In-beom (Kim Jung-min 90+2), Moon Seon-min (Na Sang-ho 69), Nam Tae-hee, Lee Chung-yong (Lee Jin-hyun 81), Hwang Ui-jo (Suk Hyun-jun 46).

Nov17 - Amman
Jordan 2 (Shafi 25, Haddad 58)
India 1 (Kumar 61)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Al Baag (Irq)

Nov17 - Port Vila
Vanuatu 2 (Soromon, Bob)
New Caledonia 2 (Roine 32, Gony 42)
HT: 1-2
Sent off: Wadenges (New Caledonia) 90

Sunday, November 18

Nov18 - Las Palmas
Spain 1 (Brais Mendez 78)
Bosnia-Herzegovina 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 17,798. **Ref:** Xistra (Por)
Spain: Kepa (Pau Lopez 75) - Jonny (Azpilicueta 51), Llorente, Hermoso, Gaya, Marco Asensio, Rodri, Dani Ceballos (Fornals 64), Suso (Brais Mendez 59), Morata (Rodrigo 64), Isco.
Bosnia-Herzegovina: Sehic - Cimirot, Bicakcic, Zukanovic, Nastic, Saric (Prcic 79), Besic, Gojak, Visca (Bajic 81), Dzeko (Kodro 85), Krunic (Duljevic 62).

Monday, November 19

Nov19 - Muscat
Oman 2 (Al Farsi 56, Al Yahmadi 90)
Bahrain 1 (Al Humaidan 68)
HT: 0-0

Nov19 - Eupen, Belgium
Qatar 2 (Al Haidos 3, Khoukhi 68)
Iceland 2 (Al Sheeb og 29, Sigthorsson pen 56)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 2,830. **Ref:** Van Boekel (Hol)
Qatar: Al Sheeb - Pedro Miguel, Salman, Khoukhi, A Hassan, Al Haidos (Ali Afif 90+1), Madibo, Boudiaf (Al Hajri 84), Almoez Ali, Akram Afif (Awadh 87), Alaaeldin (Hatem 58).
Iceland: Runarsson - Ingason, Arnason (Hermannsson 35), Magnusson, Gislason (Saevarsson 75), Traustason, Jonsson, A Sigurdsson (Fridjonsson 74), Skulason, A Gudmundsson, Sigthorsson (A Bjarnason 62).

Tuesday, November 20

Nov 20 - Elbasan
Albania 1 (Balaj pen 59)
Wales 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 3,000. **Ref:** Jakimovski (Mac)
Albania: Berisha - Hysaj, Ismajli, Mavraj, Veseli, Basha, Uzuni, Lila (Memushaj 60), Xhaka, Grezda (Lilaj 69), Balaj.
Wales: Ward - C Roberts (Freeman 78), Lockyer, J Lawrence, Gunter, King, Allen (Ramsey 56), Wilson, Brooks (Bale 60), James (Woodburn 56), Vokes (Matondo 78).

Nov 20 - Mendoza
Argentina 2 (Icardi 2, Dybala 87)
Mexico 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 35,000. **Ref:** Gallo (Col)
Argentina: Rulli (Gazzaniga 59) - Mercado, Funes Mori, Kannemann, Acuna, Pereyra, Ascacibar (Paredes 55), Meza (Simeone 73), Lamela (Lo Celso 59), Icardi (Dybala 81), De Paul (Cervi 46).
Mexico: J J Corona - Duenas, Alvarez, Dominguez (Mier 46), Arteaga (Rodriguez 46), Guzman, Aguirre, Gutierrez (Alvarado 46), Brizuela (Zaldivar 63), Martin (Pulido 82), Aquino (Gallardo 46).

Nov 20 - Sydney
Australia 3 (Boyle 19, 41, Leckie 68)
Lebanon 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 33,268. **Ref:** Sato (Jap)
Australia: Ryan (Vukovic 46) - Grant, Sainsbury (Jurman 85), Degenek, Behich, Amini (Jeggo 74), Irvine, Boyle, Mooy (Cahill 82), Mabil (Leckie 66), Juric (Nabbout 69).
Lebanon: Khalil - Nassar, Al Zein, Mansour (Jounaidi 71), Oumari, Ismail (H A Chaito 88), Jradi (N Matar 75), Ayass (Ataya 60), A Haidar, Bugiel (M Haidar 6; H S Chaito 85), Maatouk.

Nov 20 - Milton Keynes, England
Brazil 1 (Richarlison 45)
Cameroon 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 20,712. **Ref:** Oliver (Eng)
Brazil: Ederson - Danilo, Marquinhos, Pablo, Alex Sandro, Arthur, Allan, Paulinho (Walace 69), Willian (Dougas Costa 68), Roberto Firmino (Gabriel Jesus 46), Neymar (Richarlison 8).
Cameroon: Onana (Ondoa 46) - Fuchs, Kana-Biyik, Banana, Bong, Malong (Olinga 76), Mandjeck, Djoum, Choupo-Moting (N'Jie 65), Bahoken (Bassogog 68), Toko Ekambi (Zoua 89).

Nov 20 - Temuco
Chile 4 (Vidal 8, pen 35, Sanchez 61, Castillo pen 84)
Honduras 1 (A Lopez 39)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 17,000. **Ref:** Espinoza (Per)
Chile: Cortes - Isla (Pinares 89), Medel (Kuscevic 90+1), Maripan, Beausejour (Opazo 46), Hernandez (Pulgar 80), Reyes, Sagal, Vidal (Valdes 58), Sanchez, Castillo (Paredes 85).
Honduras: L Lopez (Menjivar 87) - Beckeles, H Figueroa, M Figueroa, Izaguirre, Elis (Rochez 75), Mejia, Acosta (Flores 62), Quioto (Chirinos 66), A Lopez (Bengtson 63), Lozano (Banegas 71).

Nov 20 - Haikou
China 1 (Feng Xiaoting 9)
Palestine 1 (Pinto 63)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Perera (Sri)

Nov 20 - San Salvador
El Salvador 1 (Rivas 30)
Haiti 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Lopez (Gtm)

Nov 20 - Paris
France 1 (Giroud pen 52)
Uruguay 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 70,000. **Ref:** Skomina (Sln)
France: Lloris - Pavard, Rami, Sakho (Kimpembe 46), Mendy, Ndombele (Fekir 70), Kante, Mbappe (Thauvin 36), Griezmann (Sissoko 90+2), Matuidi (Nzonzi 63), Giroud (Plea 80).
Uruguay: Campana - M Suarez, Mendez, Caceres, Laxalt, Bentancur, Torreira (Rodriguez 74), Valverde (De Arrascaeta 60), Vecino, Cavani, L Suarez.

Nov 20 - Doha, Qatar
Iran 1 (Gholizadeh 42)
Venezuela 1 (Machis 35)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 750. **Ref:** Al Jassim (Qat)
Iran: Abedzadeh - Kanaani, Rezaeian (Moharrami 74), Khanzadeh, Mohammadi, Ebrahimi, Taremi (Rezaei 82), Amiri (Torabi 65), Ghoddos (Shojaei 73), Gholizadeh (Dejagah 74), Azmoun (Ansarifard 65).
Venezuela: Farinez - Hernandez, Angel, Chancellor, Anor, Moreno, Herrera (Savarino 61), Rincon, Cordova (Murillo 73), Machis (Gonzalez 82), Martinez (Rondon 73).

Nov 20 - Al Ain, UAE
Iraq 0
Bolivia 0
Ref: Al Hammadi (UAE)

Nov 20 - Genk, Belgium
Italy 1 (Politano 90+4)
United States 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 13,500. **Ref:** Cakir (Tur)
Italy: Sirigu - De Sciglio, Bonucci, Acerbi, Emerson, Barella (Gagliardini 76), Sensi, Verratti, Chiesa (Grifo 46), Lasagna (Politano 87), Berardi (Kean 62).
United States: Horvath - Carter-Vickers, Zimmerman, Long, Cannon (Villafana 75), Delgado (Trapp 62), Adams, Acosta (Lletget 83), Moore, Pulisic (Gall 83), Sargent (Wood 62).

Nov 20 - Toyota
Japan 4 (Yamanaka 2, Haraguchi 19, Osako 72, Nakajima 73)
Kyrgyzstan 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 38,353. **Ref:** Tantashev (Uzb)
Japan: Gonda - Muroya, Miura, Makino (Yoshida 61), Yamanaka, J Ito (Doan 59), Misao (Shibasaki 59), Morita, Haraguchi (Minamino 72), Kitagawa (Nakajima 72), Sugimoto (Osako 59).
Kyrgyzstan: Matiash - Yusupov, Duyshobekov, Kozubaev, Tagoe, Shakirov (Akmatov 35), Zhyrgalbek Uulu (Israilov 46), Musabekov (Sydykov 46), Bernhardt (Rustamov 83), Akhmedov (Sagynbaev 74), Lux (Batyrkanov 56).

Nov 20 - Amman
Jordan 1 (Samir 70)
Saudi Arabia 1 (Al Muwallad 59)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 7,500. **Ref:** Shukralla (Bhn)

Nov 20 - Kuwait City
Kuwait 1 (Naser 90+2)
Syria 2 (Midani 74, Kalfa 90)
HT: 0-0

Nov 20 - Asaba
Nigeria 0
Uganda 0
Ref: Houngnandande (Ben)
Nigeria: Akpeyi - Idowu, Ajayi, Ogu (Iheanacho 88), Collins, Agu, Etebo (Troost-Ekong 46), Iwobi (Onyekuru 75), Chukwueze (Kalu 46), Musa (Simon 70), Osimhen (Success 46).
Uganda: Salim - Wadada, Walusimbi, Awanyi, Iguma, Lwanga (Saddam 71), Aucho, Okwi, Nsibambi (Kaddu 58), Kyambadde (Kateregga 58), Waiswa (Karisa 88).

Nov 20 - Panama City
Panama 1 (Cummings 84)
Ecuador 2 (Cifuente 58, E Valencia 88)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 12,000. **Ref:** Villarreal (USA)
Panama: Mejia - Murillo, Machado (Cummings 57), Escobar, Davis, Godoy, Camargo (Carrasquilla 46), Rodriguez (Browne 61), Blackburn (Small 80), Quintero (Martinez 77), Arroyo (Clarke 46).
Ecuador: Banguera - Paredes, Narvaez, Arreaga, Caicedo, Mendez (Gruezo 46), Intriago, Vega (Ayrton Preciado 46), Bolanos (Renato Ibarra 46), Angulo (E Valencia 60), Cifuente (Romario Ibarra 65).

Nov 20 - Arequipa
Peru 2 (Flores 20, Farfan 73)
Costa Rica 3 (McDonald 41, Cruz 54, Campbell pen 77)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 40,000. **Ref:** Orbe (Ecu)
Peru: Gallese - Corzo, Araujo, Santamaria, Trauco, Aquino (Tapia 66), Yotun (Calcaterra 81), Polo (Carrillo 60), Benavente (Gonzales 81), Flores (Reyna 61), Ruidiaz (Farfan 69).
Costa Rica: Alvarado - Salinas, Gonzalez, Waston, Calvo, Matarrita (Mora 68), Ruiz (Aguilar 59), Borges, Cruz (Cubero 64), Campbell (Leal 86), McDonald (George 74).

Nov 20 - Durban
South Africa 1 (Tau 90+3)
Paraguay 1 (Santander 32)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 8,868. **Ref:** Heeralall (Mrs)
South Africa: Keet (Williams 46) - Mphahlele (Mkhize 57), Madisha (Mkhwanazi 46), Hlatshwayo, Maela, Mabunda (Makaringe 46), Mokoena, Pule, Maboe (Serero 65), Tau, Mothiba (Ndlovu 46).
Paraguay: Silva - Valdez, Balbuena, Alonso, Alderete (R Ortiz 46), R Rojas (Angel Romero 78), Dominguez (Villalba 65), C Ortiz (Paredes 46), Almiron, Gonzalez (Alejandro Romero 46), Santander (Sanabria 46).

Nov 20 - Rades
Tunisia 0
Morocco 1 (En-Nesyri 41)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 8,000. **Ref:** El Din (Egy)
Tunisia: Ben Mustapha - Nagguez (Mathlouthi 90+1), Meriah, Ben Youssef, Haddadi, Skhiri (Bedoui 72), Sassi (Chaouat 65), Ben Mohamed (Karoui 90+1), Khaoui (Srarfi 56), Sliti (Drager 78), Khazri.
Morocco: El Kajoui - Dirar (Hakimi 69), Saiss, Benatia (Da Costa 46), El Hajjam, Fajr, Amrabat (Mazraoui 85), Ait Bennasser, Hafidi (Azaro 46), Boufal (El Ahmadi 88), En-Nesyri.

Nov 20 - Antalya
Turkey 0
Ukraine 0
Att: 31,000. **Ref:** Nuza (Kos)
Turkey: Bolat - Muldur (Merih 85), Ayhan (Ertugrul 54), Caglar, Bayram, Okay, Irfan (Aytac 89), Cengiz, Ozyakup (Gurler 46), Malli (Mehmet Topal 74), Enes (Tosun 46).
Ukraine: Lunin - Karavaev, Plastun, Matviyenko, Mykolenko, Shaparenko (Malinovskyi 46), Makarenko (Buyalskyy 83), Zinchenko, Tsygankov (Shved 77), Kovalenko (Boryachuk 85), Konoplyanka (Bolbat 64).

Nov 20 - Dubai
United Arab Emirates 2 (Rashid 20, Salmeen 66)
Yemen 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Al Hanfosh (Sau)

Nov 20 - Brisbane, Australia
Uzbekistan 0
South Korea 4 (Nam Tae-hee 9, Hwang Ui-jo 24, Moon Seon-min 70, Suk Hyun-jun 82)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 1,705. **Ref:** Beath (Aus)
Uzbekistan: Nesterov - Shorakhmedov, Tukhtakhujaev, Ismailov, Zoteev, Khamrobekov, Shukurov, Khamdamov (Gafurov 74), Sidikov (Alibaev 64), Turgunbayev (Bikmaev 46), Shomurodov.
South Korea: Cho Hyun-woo - Lee Yong, Jung Seung-hyun (Park Ji-soo 82), Kim Young-gwon (Kwon Kyung-won 63), Park Joo-ho (Hong Chul 76), Hwang In-beom, Ju Se-jong, Na Sang-ho, Nam Tae-hee (Moon Seon-min 52), Lee Chung-yong (Lee Jin-hyun 76), Hwang Ui-jo (Suk Hyun-jun 70).

Club football

EUROPE

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Group A

Sep18
Club Brugge (Blg) 0
Borussia Dortmund (Ger) 1 (Pulisic 85)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 25,181. **Ref:** Makkelie (Hol)

Monaco (Fra) 1 (Grandsir 18)
Atletico Madrid (Spa) 2 (Diego Costa 31, Gimenez 45+1)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 10,575. **Ref:** Collum (Sco)

Oct 3
Atletico Madrid 3 (Griezmann 28, 67, Koke 90+4)
Club Brugge 1 (Groeneveld 39)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 55,742. **Ref:** Kruzliak (Slk)

Borussia Dortmund 3 (Bruun Larsen 51, Paco Alcacer 72, Reus 90+2)
Monaco 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 66,099. **Ref:** Kulbakov (Bls)

Oct 24
Borussia Dortmund 4 (Witsel 38, Raphael Guerreiro 73, 89, Sancho 83)
Atletico Madrid 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 66,099. **Ref:** Taylor (Eng)

Club Brugge 1 (Wesley 39)
Monaco 1 (Sylla 31)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 23,957. **Ref:** Oliver (Eng)

Nov 6
Atletico Madrid 2 (Saul 33, Griezmann 80)
Borussia Dortmund 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 61,023. **Ref:** Orsato (Ita)

Monaco 0
Club Brugge 4 (Vanaken 12, pen 17, Wesley 24, Vormer 85)
HT: 0-3. **Att:** 8,347. **Ref:** Dias (Por)

Nov 28
Atletico Madrid 2 (Koke 2, Griezmann 24)
Monaco 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 56,314. **Ref:** Gestranius (Fin)
Sent off: Savic (Atletico Madrid) 82

Borussia Dortmund 0
Club Brugge 0
Att: 66,099. **Ref:** Mazeika (Lit)

Dec11
Club Brugge 0
Atletico Madrid 0
Att: 25,645. **Ref:** Massa (Ita)

Monaco 0
Borussia Dortmund 2 (Raphael Guerreiro 15, 88)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 8,731. **Ref:** Pawson (Eng)

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP A – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
B Dortmund (Q)	6	4	1	1	10	2	13
Atl Madrid (Q)	6	4	1	1	9	6	13
Cl Brugge (EL)	6	1	3	2	6	5	6
Monaco	6	0	1	5	2	14	1

Group B

Sep18
Barcelona (Spa) 4 (Messi 32, 77, 87, Dembele 75)
PSV Eindhoven (Hol) 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 73,462. **Ref:** Sidiropoulos (Gre)
Sent off: Umtiti (Barcelona) 79

Internazionale (Ita) 2 (Icardi 86, Vecino 90+2)
Tottenham Hotspur (Eng) 1 (Eriksen 53)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 64,123. **Ref:** Turpin (Fra)

Oct 3
PSV Eindhoven 1 (Rosario 27)
Internazionale 2 (Nainggolan 44, Icardi 60)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 34,750. **Ref:** Mazic (Ser)

Tottenham Hotspur 2 (Kane 52, Lamela 66)
Barcelona 4 (Philippe Coutinho 2, Rakitic 28, Messi 56, 90)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 82,137. **Ref:** Zwayer (Ger)

Oct 24
Barcelona 2 (Rafinha 32, Jordi Alba 83)
Internazionale 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 86,290. **Ref:** Hategan (Rom)

PSV Eindhoven 2 (Lozano 30, De Jong 87)
Tottenham Hotspur 2 (Lucas Moura 39, Kane 55)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 35,000. **Ref:** Vincic (Sln)
Sent off: Lloris (Tottenham Hotspur) 79

Nov 6
Internazionale 1 (Icardi 87)
Barcelona 1 (Malcom 83)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 70,915. **Ref:** Marciniak (Pol)

Tottenham Hotspur 2 (Kane 78, 89)
PSV Eindhoven 1 (De Jong 2)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 46,588. **Ref:** Kruzliak (Slk)

Nov 28
PSV Eindhoven 1 (De Jong 83)
Barcelona 2 (Messi 61, Pique 70)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 34,600. **Ref:** Kralovec (CzR)

Tottenham Hotspur 1 (Eriksen 80)
Internazionale 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 57,132. **Ref:** Cakir (Tur)

Dec11
Barcelona 1 (Dembele 7)
Tottenham Hotspur 1 (Lucas Moura 85)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 69,961. **Ref:** Mazic (Ser)

Internazionale 1 (Icardi 73)
PSV Eindhoven 1 (Lozano 13)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 62,533. **Ref:** Zwayer (Ger)

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP B – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Barcelona (Q)	6	4	2	0	14	5	14
Tottenham (Q)	6	2	2	2	9	10	8
Inter (EL)	6	2	2	2	6	7	8
PSV	6	0	2	4	6	13	2

Group C

Sep18
Liverpool (Eng) 3 (Sturridge 30, Milner pen 36, Roberto Firmino 90+2)
Paris Saint-Germain (Fra) 2 (Meunier 40, Mbappe 83)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 52,478. **Ref:** Cakir (Tur)

Red Star Belgrade (Ser) 0
Napoli (Ita) 0
Att: 49,112. **Ref:** Marciniak (Pol)

Oct 3
Napoli 1 (Insigne 90)
Liverpool 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 37,057. **Ref:** Kassai (Hun)

Paris Saint-Germain 6 (Neymar 20, 22, 81, Cavani 37, Di Maria 42, Mbappe 70)
Red Star Belgrade 1 (Marin 74)
HT: 4-0. **Att:** 39,979. **Ref:** Dias (Por)

Oct 24
Liverpool 4 (Roberto Firmino 20, Salah 45, pen 51, Mane 80)
Red Star Belgrade 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 53,024. **Ref:** Siebert (Ger)

Paris Saint-Germain 2 (Mario Rui og 61, Di Maria 90+3)
Napoli 2 (Insigne 29, Mertens 77)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 46,274. **Ref:** Zwayer (Ger)

Nov 6
Napoli 1 (Insigne pen 63)
Paris Saint-Germain 1 (Bernat 45+2)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 55,489. **Ref:** Kuipers (Hol)

Red Star Belgrade 2 (Pavkov 22, 29)
Liverpool 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 51,318. **Ref:** Mateu Lahoz (Spa)

Nov 28
Napoli 3 (Hamsik 11, Mertens 33, 52)
Red Star Belgrade 1 (Ben Nabouhane 57)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 44,470. **Ref:** Gil Manzano (Spa)

Paris Saint-Germain 2 (Bernat 13, Neymar 37)
Liverpool 1 (Milner pen 45+1)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 46,880. **Ref:** Marciniak (Pol)

Dec11
Liverpool 1 (Salah 34)
Napoli 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 52,015. **Ref:** Skomina (Sln)

Red Star Belgrade 1 (Gobeljic 56)
Paris Saint-Germain 4 (Cavani 10, Neymar 40, Marquinhos 74, Mbappe 90+2)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 48,357. **Ref:** Collum (Sco)

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP C – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
PSG (Q)	6	3	2	1	17	9	11
Liverpool (Q)	6	3	0	3	9	7	9
Napoli (EL)	6	2	3	1	7	5	9
Red Star B	6	1	1	4	5	17	4

Group D

Sep18
Galatasaray (Tur) 3 (Garry Rodrigues 9, Derdiyok 67, Selcuk pen 90+4)
Lokomotiv Moscow (Rus) 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 43,542. **Ref:** Rocchi (Ita)
Sent off: N'Diaye (Galatasaray) 87

Schalke (Ger) 1 (Embolo 64)
Porto (Por) 1 (Otavio pen 75)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 45,755. **Ref:** Gil Manzano (Spa)

Oct 3
Lokomotiv Moscow 0
Schalke 1 (McKennie 88)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 21,471. **Ref:** Taylor (Eng)

Porto 1 (Marega 49)
Galatasaray 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 42,711. **Ref:** Oliver (Eng)

Oct 24
Galatasaray 0
Schalke 0
Att: 46,667. **Ref:** Bastien (Fra)

Lokomotiv Moscow 1 (Anton Miranchuk 38)
Porto 3 (Marega pen 26, Herrera 35, Corona 47)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 16,034. **Ref:** Madden (Sco)
Sent off: Kverkvelia (Lokomotiv Moscow) 76

Nov 6
Porto 4 (Herrera 2, Marega 42, Corona 67, Otavio 90+3)
Lokomotiv Moscow 1 (Farfan 59)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 34,616. **Ref:** Massa (Ita)

Schalke 2 (Burgstaller 4, Uth 57)
Galatasaray 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 54,740. **Ref:** Collum (Sco)

Nov 28
Lokomotiv Moscow 2 (Donk og 43, Ignatyev 54)
Galatasaray 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 14,037. **Ref:** Mateu Lahoz (Spa)

Porto 3 (Militao 52, Corona 55, Marega 90+4)
Schalke 1 (Bentaleb pen 89)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 41,603. **Ref:** Hategan (Rom)

Dec11
Galatasaray 2 (Feghouli pen 45+1, Derdiyok 65)
Porto 3 (Felipe 17, Marega pen 42, Sergio Oliveira 57)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 33,972. **Ref:** Kulbakov (Bls)

Schalke 1 (Schopf 90+1)
Lokomotiv Moscow 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 48,883. **Ref:** Sidiropoulos (Gre)

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP D – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Porto (Q)	6	5	1	0	15	6	16
Schalke (Q)	6	3	2	1	6	4	11
Galatasaray (EL)	6	1	1	4	5	8	4
Lokomotiv M	6	1	0	5	4	12	3

Group E

Sep19
Ajax (Hol) 3 (Tagliafico 46, 90, Van de Beek 77)
AEK Athens (Gre) 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 52,285.
Ref: Del Cerro Grande (Spa)

Benfica (Por) 0
Bayern Munich (Ger) 2 (Lewandowski 10, Renato Sanches 54)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 60,274. **Ref:** Mateu Lahoz (Spa)

Oct 2
AEK Athens 2 (Klonaridis 53, 63)
Benfica 3 (Seferovic 6, Grimaldo 15, Semedo 74)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 31,154. **Ref:** Grinfeld (Isr)
Sent off: Ruben Dias (Benfica) 45+3

Bayern Munich 1 (Hummels 4)
Ajax 1 (Mazraoui 22)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 70,000. **Ref:** Kralovec (CzR)

Oct 23
AEK Athens 0
Bayern Munich 2 (Martinez 61, Lewandowski 63)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 61,221. **Ref:** Kulbakov (Bls)

Ajax 1 (Mazraoui 90+2)
Benfica 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 52,489. **Ref:** Buquet (Fra)

Nov 7
Bayern Munich 2 (Lewandowski pen 31, 71)
AEK Athens 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 70,000. **Ref:** Jug (Sln)

Benfica 1 (Jonas 29)
Ajax 1 (Tadic 61)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 51,328. **Ref:** Rocchi (Ita)

Nov 27
AEK Athens 0
Ajax 2 (Tadic pen 68, 72)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 25,756. **Ref:** Oliver (Eng)
Sent off: Livaja (AEK Athens) 67

Bayern Munich 5 (Robben 13, 30, Lewandowski 36, 51, Ribery 76)
Benfica 1 (Gedson Fernandes 46)
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 70,000. **Ref:** Orsato (Ita)

Dec12
Ajax 3 (Tadic 61, pen 82, Tagliafico 90+5)
Bayern Munich 3 (Lewandowski 13, pen 87, Coman 90)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 52,244. **Ref:** Turpin (Fra)
Sent off: Wober (Ajax) 67; Muller (Bayern Munich) 75

Benfica 1 (Grimaldo 88)
AEK Athens 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 33,633. **Ref:** Madden (Sco)
Sent off: Galanopoulos (AEK Athens) 87

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP E – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bayern M (Q)	6	4	2	0	15	5	14
Ajax (Q)	6	3	3	0	11	5	12
Benfica (EL)	6	2	1	3	6	11	7
AEK Athens	6	0	0	6	2	13	0

Group F

Sep19
Manchester City (Eng) 1 (Bernardo Silva 67)
Lyon (Fra) 2 (Cornet 26, Fekir 43)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 40,111. **Ref:** Orsato (Ita)

Shakhtar Donetsk (Ukr) 2 (Ismaily 27, Maycon 81)
1899 Hoffenheim (Ger) 2 (Grillitsch 6, Nordtveit 38)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 28,336. **Ref:** Kehlet (Den)

Oct 2
1899 Hoffenheim 1 (Belfodil 1)
Manchester City 2 (Aguero 8, D Silva 87)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 24,851. **Ref:** Skomina (Sln)

Lyon 2 (Dembele 70, Dubois 72)
Shakhtar Donetsk 2 (Junior Moraes 44, 55)
HT: 0-1. *Played behind closed doors.*
Ref: Treimanis (Lat)

Oct 23
1899 Hoffenheim 3 (Kramaric 33, 47, Joelinton 90+2)
Lyon 3 (Traore 27, Ndombele 59, Depay 67)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 24,144. **Ref:** Undiano Mallenco (Spa)

Shakhtar Donetsk 0
Manchester City 3 (D Silva 30, Laporte 35, Bernardo Silva 71)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 37,106. **Ref:** Del Cerro Grande (Spa)

Nov 7
Lyon 2 (Fekir 19, Ndombele 28)
1899 Hoffenheim 2 (Kramaric 65, Kaderabek 90+2)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 53,850. **Ref:** Makkelie (Hol)
Sent off: Nuhu (1899 Hoffenheim) 51

Manchester City 6 (D Silva 13, Gabriel Jesus pen 24, pen 72, 90+2, Sterling 49, Mahrez 84)
Shakhtar Donetsk 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 52,286. **Ref:** Kassai (Hun)

Nov 27
1899 Hoffenheim 2 (Kramaric 17, Zuber 40)
Shakhtar Donetsk 3 (Ismaily 14, Taison 15, 90+2)
HT: 2-2. **Att:** 22,920. **Ref:** Kruzliak (Slk)
Sent off: Szalai (1899 Hoffenheim) 60

Lyon 2 (Cornet 55, 81)
Manchester City 2 (Laporte 62, Aguero 83)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 56,039. **Ref:** Rocchi (Ita)

Dec12
Manchester City 2 (Sane 45+1, 61)
1899 Hoffenheim 1 (Kramaric pen 16)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 50,411. **Ref:** Ekberg (Swe)

Shakhtar Donetsk 1 (Junior Moraes 22)
Lyon 1 (Fekir 65)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 38,916. **Ref:** Kuipers (Hol)

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP F – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Man City (Q)	6	4	1	1	16	6	13
Lyon (Q)	6	1	5	0	12	11	8
Shakhtar (EL)	6	1	3	2	8	16	6
Hoffenheim	6	0	3	3	11	14	3

Group G

Sep19
Real Madrid (Spa) 3 (Isco 45, Bale 58, Mariano 90+1)
Roma (Ita) 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 69,251. **Ref:** Kuipers (Hol)

Viktoria Plzen (CzR) 2 (Krmencik 29, 41)
CSKA Moscow (Rus) 2 (Chalov 49, Vlasic pen 90+5)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 11,312. **Ref:** Bastien (Fra)

Oct 2
CSKA Moscow 1 (Vlasic 2)
Real Madrid 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 71,811. **Ref:** Hategan (Rom)

Roma 5 (Dzeko 3, 40, 90+2, Cengiz 64, Kluivert 73)
Viktoria Plzen 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 41,243. **Ref:** Raczkowski (Pol)

Oct 23
Real Madrid 2 (Benzema 11, Marcelo 55)
Viktoria Plzen 1 (Hrosovsky 79)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 67,356. **Ref:** Grinfeld (Isr)

Roma 3 (Dzeko 30, 43, Cengiz 50)
CSKA Moscow 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 46,005. **Ref:** Sidiropoulos (Gre)

Nov 7
CSKA Moscow 1 (Sigurdsson 50)
Roma 2 (Manolas 4, Lorenzo Pellegrini 59)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 64,454. **Ref:** Cakir (Tur)
Sent off: Magnusson (CSKA Moscow) 56

Viktoria Plzen 0
Real Madrid 5 (Benzema 21, 37, Casemiro 23, Bale 40, Kroos 67)
HT: 0-4. **Att:** 11,483. **Ref:** Aytekin (Ger)

Nov 27
CSKA Moscow 1 (Vlasic pen 10)
Viktoria Plzen 2 (Prochazka 56, Hejda 81)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 52,892. **Ref:** Makkelie (Hol)

Roma 0
Real Madrid 2 (Bale 47, Lucas Vazquez 59)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 59,124. **Ref:** Turpin (Fra)

Dec12
Real Madrid 0
CSKA Moscow 3 (Chalov 37, Schennikov 43, Sigurdsson 73)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 51,636. **Ref:** Dias (Por)

Viktoria Plzen 2 (Kovarik 62, Chory 72)
Roma 1 (Cengiz 68)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 11,217. **Ref:** Taylor (Eng)
Sent off: Luca Pellegrini (Roma) 90+2

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP G – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Real Madrid (Q)	6	4	0	2	12	5	12
Roma (Q)	6	3	0	3	11	8	9
Vik Plzen (EL)	6	2	1	3	7	16	7
CSKA M	6	2	1	3	8	9	7

Group H

Sep19
Valencia (Spa) 0
Juventus (Ita) 2 (Pjanic pen 45, pen 51)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 46,067. **Ref:** Brych (Ger)
Sent off: Cristiano Ronaldo (Juventus) 29

Young Boys (Swi) 0
Manchester United (Eng) 3 (Pogba 35, pen 44, Martial 66)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 31,120. **Ref:** Aytekin (Ger)

Oct 2
Juventus 3 (Dybala 5, 33, 69)
Young Boys 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 40,961. **Ref:** Karasev (Rus)
Sent off: Camara (Young Boys) 78

Manchester United 0
Valencia 0
Att: 73,569. **Ref:** Vincic (Sln)

Oct 23
Manchester United 0
Juventus 1 (Dybala 17)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 73,946. **Ref:** Mazic (Ser)

Young Boys 1 (Hoarau pen 55)
Valencia 1 (Batshuayi 26)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 31,120. **Ref:** Treimanis (Lat)

Nov 7
Juventus 1 (Cristiano Ronaldo 65)
Manchester United 2 (Mata 86, Bonucci og 90)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 41,470. **Ref:** Hategan (Rom)

Valencia 3 (Santi Mina 14, 42, Soler 56)
Young Boys 1 (Assale 37)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 36,480. **Ref:** Kovacs (Rom)
Sent off: Sanogo (Young Boys) 77

Nov 27
Juventus 1 (Mandzukic 59)
Valencia 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 39,070. **Ref:** Collum (Sco)

Manchester United 1 (Fellaini 90+1)
Young Boys 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 72,876. **Ref:** Brych (Ger)

Dec12
Valencia 2 (Soler 17, Jones og 47)
Manchester United 1 (Rashford 87)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 36,544. **Ref:** Kabakov (Bul)

Young Boys 2 (Hoarau pen 30, 68)
Juventus 1 (Dybala 80)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 30,114. **Ref:** Stieler (Ger)

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP H – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Juventus (Q)	6	4	0	2	9	4	12
Man United (Q)	6	3	1	2	7	4	10
Valencia (EL)	6	2	2	2	6	6	8
Young Boys	6	1	1	4	4	12	4

● *The top 2 in each group have qualified for the 1st knockout round (last16); the 3rd-placed teams enter the Europa League*

1st knockout round (last 16) draw

Ajax v Real Madrid (Feb 13 & Mar 5)
Atletico Madrid v Juventus (Feb 20 & Mar 12)
Liverpool v Bayern Munich (Feb 19 & Mar 13)
Lyon v Barcelona (Feb 19 & Mar 13)
Manchester Utd v PSG (Feb 12 & Mar 6)
Roma v Porto (Feb 12 & Mar 6)
Schalke v Manchester City (Feb 20 & Mar 12)
Tottenham v B Dortmund (Feb 13 & Mar 5)

EUROPA LEAGUE

Group A

Sep 20: AEK Larnaca (Cyp) 0 Zurich (Swi) 1; Ludogorets (Bul) 2 Bayer Leverkusen (Ger) 3. **Oct 4:** Bayer Leverkusen 4 AEK Larnaca 2; Zurich 1 Ludogorets 0. **Oct 25:** AEK Larnaca 1 Ludogorets 1; Zurich 3 Bayer Leverkusen 2. **Nov 8:** Bayer Leverkusen 1 Zurich 0; Ludogorets 0 AEK Larnaca 0. **Nov 29:** Bayer Leverkusen 1 Ludogorets 1; Zurich 1 AEK Larnaca 2. **Dec 13:** AEK Larnaca 1 Bayer Leverkusen 5; Ludogorets 1 Zurich 1.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP A – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Leverkusen (Q)	6	4	1	1	16	9	13
Zurich (Q)	6	3	1	2	7	6	10
AEK Larnaca	6	1	2	3	6	12	5
Ludogorets	6	0	4	2	5	7	4

Group B

Sep 20: Celtic (Sco) 1 Rosenborg (Nor) 0; RB Leipzig (Ger) 2 Salzburg (Aut) 3. **Oct 4:** Rosenborg 1 RB Leipzig 3; Salzburg 3 Celtic 1. **Oct 25:** RB Leipzig 2 Celtic 0; Salzburg 3 Rosenborg 0. **Nov 8:** Celtic 2 RB Leipzig 1; Rosenborg 2 Salzburg 5. **Nov 29:** Rosenborg 0 Celtic 1; Salzburg 1 RB Leipzig 0. **Dec 13:** Celtic 1 Salzburg 2; RB Leipzig 1 Rosenborg 1.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP B – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Salzburg (Q)	6	6	0	0	17	6	18
Celtic (Q)	6	3	0	3	6	8	9
RB Leipzig	6	2	1	3	9	8	7
Rosenborg	6	0	1	5	4	14	1

Group C

Sep 20: Copenhagen (Den) 1 Zenit St Petersburg (Rus) 1; Slavia Prague (CzR) 1 Bordeaux (Fra) 0. **Oct 4:** Bordeaux 1 Copenhagen 2; Zenit St Petersburg 1 Slavia Prague 0. **Oct 25:** Copenhagen 0 Slavia Prague 1; Zenit St Petersburg 2 Bordeaux 1. **Nov 8:** Bordeaux 1 Zenit St Petersburg 1; Slavia Prague 0 Copenhagen 0. **Nov 29:** Bordeaux 2 Slavia Prague 0; Zenit St Petersburg 1 Copenhagen 0. **Dec 13:** Copenhagen 0 Bordeaux 1; Slavia Prague 2 Zenit St Petersburg 0.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP C – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Zenit (Q)	6	3	2	1	6	5	11
Slavia P'gue (Q)	6	3	1	2	4	3	10
Bordeaux	6	2	1	3	6	6	7
Copenhagen	6	1	2	3	3	5	5

Group D

Sep 20: Dinamo Zagreb (Cro) 4 Fenerbahce (Tur) 1; Spartak Trnava (Slk) 1 Anderlecht (Blg) 0. **Oct 4:** Anderlecht 0 Dinamo Zagreb 2; Fenerbahce 2 Spartak Trnava 0. **Oct 25:** Anderlecht 2 Fenerbahce 2; Spartak Trnava 1 Dinamo Zagreb 2. **Nov 8:** Dinamo Zagreb 3 Spartak Trnava 1; Fenerbahce 2 Anderlecht 0. **Nov 29:** Anderlecht 0 Spartak Trnava 0; Fenerbahce 0 Dinamo Zagreb 0. **Dec 13:** Dinamo Zagreb 0 Anderlecht 0; Spartak Trnava 1 Fenerbahce 0.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP D – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dinamo Z (Q)	6	4	2	0	11	3	14
Fenerbahce (Q)	6	2	2	2	7	7	8
Spartak T	6	2	1	3	4	7	7
Anderlecht	6	0	3	3	2	7	3

Group E

Sep 20: Arsenal (Eng) 4 Vorskla (Ukr) 2; Sporting Lisbon (Por) 2 Qarabag (Aze) 0. **Oct 4:** Qarabag 0 Arsenal 3; Vorskla 1 Sporting Lisbon 2. **Oct 25:** Qarabag 0 Vorskla 1; Sporting Lisbon 0 Arsenal 1. **Nov 8:** Arsenal 0 Sporting Lisbon 0; Vorskla 0 Qarabag 1. **Nov 29:** Qarabag 1 Sporting Lisbon 6; Vorskla 0 Arsenal 3. **Dec 13:** Arsenal 1 Qarabag 0; Sporting Lisbon 3 Vorskla 0.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP E – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arsenal (Q)	6	5	1	0	12	2	16
Sporting L (Q)	6	4	1	1	13	3	13
Vorskla	6	1	0	5	4	13	3
Qarabag	6	1	0	5	2	13	3

Group F

Sep 20: F91 Dudelange (Lux) 0 Milan (Ita) 1; Olympiakos (Gre) 0 Real Betis (Spa) 0. **Oct 4:** Milan 3 Olympiakos 1; Real Betis 3 F91 Dudelange 0. **Oct 25:** F91 Dudelange 0 Olympiakos 2; Milan 1 Real Betis 2. **Nov 8:** Olympiakos 5 F91 Dudelange 1; Real Betis 1 Milan 1. **Nov 29:** Milan 5 F91 Dudelange 2; Real Betis 1 Olympiakos 0. **Dec 13:** F91 Dudelange 0 Real Betis 0; Olympiakos 3 Milan 1.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP F – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Real Betis (Q)	6	3	3	0	7	2	12
Olympiakos (Q)	6	3	1	2	11	6	10
Milan	6	3	1	2	12	9	10
F91 Dud'nge	6	0	1	5	3	16	1

Group G

Sep 20: Rapid Vienna (Aut) 2 Spartak Moscow (Rus) 0; Villarreal (Spa) 2 Rangers (Sco) 2. **Oct 4:** Rangers 3 Rapid Vienna 1; Spartak Moscow 3 Villarreal 3. **Oct 25:** Rangers 0 Spartak Moscow 0; Villarreal 5 Rapid Vienna 0. **Nov 8:** Rapid Vienna 0 Villarreal 0; Spartak Moscow 4 Rangers 3. **Nov 29:** Rangers 0 Villarreal 0; Spartak Moscow 1 Rapid Vienna 2. **Dec 13:** Rapid Vienna 1 Rangers 0; Villarreal 2 Spartak Moscow 0.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP G – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Villarreal (Q)	6	2	4	0	12	5	10
Rap Vienna (Q)	6	3	1	2	6	9	10
Rangers	6	1	3	2	8	8	6
Spartak M	6	1	2	3	8	12	5

Group H

Sep 20: Lazio (Ita) 2 Apollon (Cyp) 1; Marseille (Fra) 1 Eintracht Frankfurt (Ger) 2. **Oct 4:** Apollon 2 Marseille 2; Eintracht Frankfurt 4 Lazio 1. **Oct 25:** Eintracht Frankfurt 2 Apollon 0; Marseille 1 Lazio 3. **Nov 8:** Apollon 2 Eintracht Frankfurt 3; Lazio 2 Marseille 1. **Nov 29:** Apollon 2 Lazio 0; Eintracht Frankfurt 4 Marseille 0. **Dec 13:** Lazio 1 Eintracht Frankfurt 2; Marseille 1 Apollon 3.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP H – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Eintracht (Q)	6	6	0	0	17	5	18
Lazio (Q)	6	3	0	3	9	11	9
Apollon	6	2	1	3	10	10	7
Marseille	6	0	1	5	6	16	1

Group I

Sep 20: Besiktas (Tur) 3 Sarpsborg (Nor) 1; Genk (Blg) 2 Malmo (Swe) 0. **Oct 4:** Malmo 2 Besiktas 0; Sarpsborg 3 Genk 1. **Oct 25:** Besiktas 2 Genk 4; Sarpsborg 1 Malmo 1. **Nov 8:** Genk 1 Besiktas 1; Malmo 1 Sarpsborg 1. **Nov 29:** Malmo 2 Genk 2; Sarpsborg 2 Besiktas 3. **Dec 13:** Besiktas 0 Malmo 1; Genk 4 Sarpsborg 0.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP I – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Genk (Q)	6	3	2	1	14	8	11
Malmo (Q)	6	2	3	1	7	6	9
Besiktas	6	2	1	3	9	11	7
Sarpsborg	6	1	2	3	8	13	5

Group J

Sep 20: Akhisarspor (Tur) 0 Krasnodar (Rus) 1; Sevilla (Spa) 5 Standard Liege (Blg) 1. **Oct 4:** Krasnodar 2 Sevilla 1; Standard Liege 2 Akhisarspor 1. **Oct 25:** Sevilla 6 Akhisarspor 0; Standard Liege 2 Krasnodar 1. **Nov 8:** Akhisarspor 2 Sevilla 3; Krasnodar 2 Standard Liege 1. **Nov 29:** Krasnodar 2 Akhisarspor 1; Standard Liege 1 Sevilla 0. **Dec 13:** Akhisarspor 0 Standard Liege 0; Sevilla 3 Krasnodar 0.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP J – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sevilla (Q)	6	4	0	2	18	6	12
Krasnodar (Q)	6	4	0	2	8	8	12
Standard L	6	3	1	2	7	9	10
Akhisarspor	6	0	1	5	4	14	1

Group K

Sep 20: Dynamo Kiev (Ukr) 2 Astana (Kaz) 2; Rennes (Fra) 2 Jablonec (CzR) 1. **Oct 4:** Astana 2 Rennes 0; Jablonec 2 Dynamo Kiev 2. **Oct 25:** Jablonec 1 Astana 1; Rennes 1 Dynamo Kiev 2. **Nov 8:** Astana 2 Jablonec 1; Dynamo Kiev 3 Rennes 1. **Nov 29:** Astana 0 Dynamo Kiev 1; Jablonec 0 Rennes 1. **Dec 13:** Dynamo Kiev 0 Jablonec 1; Rennes 2 Astana 0.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP K – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dynamo K (Q)	6	3	2	1	10	7	11
Rennes (Q)	6	3	0	3	7	8	9
Astana	6	2	2	2	7	7	8
Jablonec	6	1	2	3	6	8	5

Group L

Sep 20: PAOK Salonika (Gre) 0 Chelsea (Eng) 1; Vidi (Hun) 0 BATE Borisov (Bls) 2. **Oct 4:** BATE Borisov 1 PAOK Salonika 4; Chelsea 1 Vidi 0. **Oct 25:** Chelsea 3 BATE Borisov 1; PAOK Salonika 0 Vidi 2. **Nov 8:** BATE Borisov 0 Chelsea 1; Vidi 1 PAOK Salonika 0. **Nov 29:** BATE Borisov 2 Vidi 0; Chelsea 4 PAOK Salonika 0. **Dec 13:** PAOK Salonika 1 BATE Borisov 3; Vidi 2 Chelsea 2.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP L – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Chelsea (Q)	6	5	1	0	12	3	16
BATE (Q)	6	3	0	3	9	9	9
Vidi	6	2	1	3	5	7	7
PAOK	6	1	0	5	5	12	3

● *The top 2 in each group have qualified for the 1st knockout round (last 32)*

1st knockout round (last 32) draw

(3rd-placed teams in the Champions League groups enter at this stage)

BATE Borisov v Arsenal**
Celtic v Valencia
Club Brugge v Salzburg
Fenerbahce v Zenit St Petersburg*
Galatasaray v Benfica
Krasnodar v Bayer Leverkusen
Lazio v Sevilla**
Malmo v Chelsea
Olympiakos v Dynamo Kiev
Rapid Vienna v Internazionale
Rennes v Real Betis
Shakhtar Donetsk v Eintracht Frankfurt
Slavia Prague v Genk
Sporting Lisbon v Villarreal
Viktoria Plzen v Dinamo Zagreb
Zurich v Napoli

*1st legs - Feb14 (*Feb12);*
*2nd legs - Feb 21 (**Feb 20)*

BELARUS

2018 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
BATE (C)	30	23	4	3	55	24	73
Shakhtyor	30	19	7	4	45	14	64
Dinamo Minsk	30	18	9	3	41	17	63
Vitebsk	30	19	5	6	47	20	62
Torpedo Z	30	16	7	7	36	18	55
Dinamo Brest	30	14	10	6	52	30	52
Neman	30	12	7	11	31	32	43
Slutsk	30	11	3	16	26	36	36
Gorodeya	30	9	7	14	31	33	34
Isloch	30	8	9	13	20	37	33
FK Minsk	30	7	9	14	34	42	30
Gomel	30	7	7	16	16	36	28
Luch	30	4	12	14	24	44	24
Torpedo Minsk	30	6	6	18	20	41	24
Smolevichy (R)	30	5	9	16	21	39	24
Dnepr (R)	30	3	7	20	17	53	16

GEORGIA

2018 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Saburtalo (C)	36	24	7	5	64	29	79
Dinamo Tbil'i	36	21	6	9	73	38	69
Torpedo	36	20	9	7	66	25	69
Chikhura	36	19	7	10	54	33	64
Dila	36	17	12	7	60	40	63
Lokomotive	36	12	8	16	43	55	44
Rustavi	36	8	13	15	33	44	37
Sioni[1]	36	8	7	21	39	65	31
Samtredia (R)[2]	36	4	9	23	28	81	21
Kolkheti[3] (R)	36	4	8	24	26	76	14

[1]Stay in top division after winning rel/prom play-off
[2]Relegated after losing rel/prom play-off
[3]6pts deducted

MOLDOVA

2018 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sheriff (C)	28	19	6	3	58	14	63
Milsami	28	13	6	9	36	24	45
Petrocub	28	12	9	7	38	28	45
Speranta	28	9	11	8	27	26	38
Zimbru	28	9	9	10	28	37	36
Dinamo-Auto	28	7	7	14	25	43	28
Sf Gheorghe	28	6	8	14	30	50	26
Zaria (R)	28	4	10	14	26	46	22

NORWAY

2018 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rosenborg (C)	30	19	7	4	51	24	64
Molde	30	18	5	7	63	36	59
Brann	30	17	7	6	45	31	58
Haugesund	30	16	5	9	45	33	53
Kristiansund	30	13	7	10	46	41	46
Valerenga	30	11	9	10	39	44	42
Ranheim	30	12	6	12	43	50	42
Sarpsborg	30	11	8	11	46	39	41
Odd	30	11	7	12	39	38	40
Tromso	30	11	3	16	41	48	36
Bodo/Glimt	30	6	14	10	32	35	32
Lillestrom	30	7	11	12	34	44	32
Stromsgodset	30	7	10	13	46	48	31
Stabaek[1]	30	6	11	13	37	50	29
Start (R)	30	8	5	17	30	54	29
Sandefjord (R)	30	4	11	15	35	57	23

[1]Stay in top division after winning rel/prom play-off

SOUTH AMERICA

LIBERTADORES CUP

Final

1st leg

Nov11
Boca Juniors (Arg) 2 (Abila 34, Benedetto 45+1)
River Plate (Arg) 2 (Pratto 36, Izquierdoz og 61)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Tobar (Chl)
Boca Juniors: Rossi - Jara (Buffarini 83), Izquierdoz, Magallan, Olaza, Nandez, Barrios, Perez, Villa (Tevez 72), Abila, Pavon (Benedetto 27).
River Plate: Armani - Montiel, Maidana, L Martinez (Fernandez 58), Pinola, Casco, Palacios, Perez (Zuculini 75), G Martinez (Quintero 77), Borre, Pratto.

2nd leg[1]

Dec 9
River Plate 3 (Pratto 68, Quintero 109, G Martinez 120+2)
Boca Juniors 1 (Benedetto 44)
Aet. **HT:** 0-1. **Ref:** Cunha (Uru)
River Plate 5-3 on agg
River Plate: Armani - Montiel (Mayada 74), Maidana, Pinola, Casco, Perez, Ponzio (Quintero 58), Fernandez (Zuculini 111), Palacios (Alvarez 97), G Martinez, Pratto.
Boca Juniors: Andrada - Buffarini (Tevez 111), Izquierdoz, Magallan, Olaza, Nandez, Barrios, Perez (Gago 89), Villa (Jara 96), Benedetto (Abila 62), Pavon. *Sent off: Barrios 92.*
[1]Played in Spain, at the Bernabeu in Madrid

SUDAMERICANA CUP

Semi-finals

1st legs - Nov 7/8; 2nd legs - Nov 28/29
Atletico Paranaense (Bra) v Fluminense (Bra) 2-0, 2-0 (agg 4-0)
Santa Fe (Col) v Junior (Col) 0-2, 0-1 (agg 0-3)

Final

1st leg

Dec 5
Junior 1 (Gonzalez 53)
Atletico Paranaense 1 (Pablo 51)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 38,094. **Ref:** Haro (Per)
Junior: Viera - Piedrahita, Gomez, Perez, G Gutierrez, Narvaez (Hernandez 84), Cantillo, Sanchez (Moreno 71), Barrera, Diaz, Gonzalez (Ruiz 67).
Atletico Paranaense: Santos - Jonathan, Thiago Heleno, Leo Pereira, Renan Lodi, Gonzalez (Marcinho 87), Bruno Guimaraes, Marcelo Cirino, Raphael Veiga (Wellington 78), Nikao, Pablo (Rony 61).

2nd leg

Dec12
Atletico Paranaense 1 (Pablo 27)
Junior 1 (T Gutierrez 58)
Aet. **HT:** 1-0. **Att:** 40,263. **Ref:** Tobar (Chl)
Agg 2-2; Atletico Paranaense 4-3 on pens
Atletico Paranaense: Santos - Jonathan, Thiago Heleno, Leo Pereira, Renan Lodi, Gonzalez (Wellington 74), Bruno Guimaraes, Marcelo Cirino (Rony 46), Raphael Veiga, Nikao (Marcinho 99), Pablo (Bergson 99).
Junior: Viera - Piedrahita, Gomez (Avila 106), Perez, Fuentes, Narvaez, Cantillo, Sanchez (Gonzalez 74), Barrera (Moreno 116), Diaz, T Gutierrez.

BRAZIL

2018 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Palmeiras (C)	38	23	11	4	64	26	80
Flamengo	38	21	9	8	59	29	72
Internacional	38	19	12	7	51	29	69
Gremio	38	18	12	8	48	27	66
Sao Paulo	38	16	15	7	46	34	63
Atl Mineiro	38	17	8	13	56	43	59
Atl Paranaense	38	16	9	13	54	37	57
Cruzeiro	38	14	11	13	34	34	53
Botafogo	38	13	12	13	38	46	51
Santos	38	13	11	14	46	40	50
Bahia	38	12	12	14	39	41	48
Fluminense	38	12	9	17	32	46	45
Corinthians	38	11	11	16	34	35	44
Chapecoense	38	11	11	16	34	50	44
Ceara	38	10	14	14	32	38	44
Vasco da Gama	38	10	13	15	41	48	43
Sport (R)	38	11	9	18	35	57	42
America M'o (R)	38	10	10	18	30	47	40
Vitoria (R)	38	9	10	19	36	63	37
Parana (R)	38	4	11	23	18	57	23

CHILE

2018 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Uni Catolica (C)	30	17	10	3	39	25	61
U Concepcion	30	18	4	8	45	31	58
Univ Chile	30	18	3	9	45	37	57
Antofagasta	30	14	11	5	48	33	53
Colo Colo	30	12	7	11	40	38	43
U La Calera	30	13	4	13	38	38	43
U Espanola	30	9	14	7	44	42	41
O'Higgins	30	12	5	13	41	41	41
Huachipato	30	10	9	11	39	32	39
Audax Italiano	30	8	10	12	40	40	34
Everton	30	9	7	14	39	44	34
Curico Unido	30	8	10	12	35	40	34
Palestino	30	7	11	12	41	45	32
Dep Iquique	30	7	11	12	34	42	32
Dep Temuco (R)	30	6	10	14	29	45	28
San Luis (R)	30	5	8	17	24	48	23

PARAGUAY

2018 – CLAUSURA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Olimpia (C)	22	15	4	3	48	20	49
C Porteno	22	11	7	4	36	21	40
Libertad	22	10	7	5	33	20	37
Sol America	22	9	6	7	29	30	33
Santini	22	7	7	8	22	29	28
Nacional	22	6	9	7	28	31	27
Guarani	22	6	7	9	27	30	25
3 Febrero (R)[1]	22	6	7	9	32	37	25
Luqueno	22	6	7	9	23	30	25
Capiata	22	6	6	10	25	36	24
General Diaz	22	5	7	10	30	39	22
Indep'nte (R)[1]	22	4	8	10	22	32	20

[1]The 2 teams with lowest points-per-game average over the 3 most recent seasons were relegated

VENEZUELA

2018 Clausura Final

1st leg - Nov18; 2nd leg - Nov 25

Dep Lara v Dep La Guaira 0-0, 1-0 (agg 1-0)

Overall 2018 Championship Final

(apertura winners, Zamora v clausura winners, Deportivo Lara)

1st leg - Dec 2; 2nd leg - Dec 5

Deportivo Lara v Zamora 1-1, 0-4 (agg 1-5)

ASIA

INDONESIA

2018 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Persija (C)	34	18	8	8	53	36	62
PSM	34	17	10	7	57	42	61
Bhayangkara	34	15	8	11	41	39	53
Persib	34	14	10	10	49	41	52
Persebaya	34	14	8	12	60	48	50
Arema	34	14	8	12	53	42	50
Borneo	34	14	6	14	50	49	48
Madura Utd	34	13	9	12	47	50	48
Barito Putera	34	12	11	11	52	55	47
PSIS	34	13	7	14	39	42	46
Bali Utd	34	12	9	13	44	48	45
Persipura	34	12	8	14	49	46	44
Persela	34	11	10	13	53	52	43
Perseru	34	11	9	14	34	41	42
PS TIRA	34	12	6	16	48	57	42
Mitra Kukar (R)	34	12	3	19	45	58	39
Sriwijaya (R)	34	11	6	17	48	56	39
PSMS (R)	34	11	4	19	50	70	37

JAPAN

2018 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Kawasaki (C)	34	21	6	7	57	27	69
Sanfrecce	34	17	6	11	47	35	57
Kashima	34	16	8	10	50	39	56
Consadole	34	15	10	9	48	48	55
Urawa	34	14	9	11	51	39	51
Tokyo	34	14	8	12	39	34	50
Cerezo	34	13	11	10	39	38	50
Shimizu	34	14	7	13	56	48	49
Gamba	34	14	6	14	41	46	48
Vissel	34	12	9	13	45	52	45
Vegalta	34	13	6	15	44	54	45
Yokohama FM	34	12	5	17	56	56	41
Shonan	34	10	11	13	38	43	41
Sagan	34	10	11	13	29	34	41
Nagoya	34	12	5	17	52	59	41
Jubilo[1]	34	10	11	13	35	48	41
Kashiwa (R)	34	12	3	19	47	54	39
V-Varen (R)	34	8	6	20	39	59	30

[1]Stay in top division after winning rel/prom play-off

SOUTH KOREA

Division split after 33-round regular season; teams carried forward full regular-season record

2018 – CHAMPIONSHIP GROUP – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Jeonbuk (C)	38	26	8	4	75	31	86
Gyeongnam	38	18	11	9	59	44	65
Ulsan	38	17	12	9	61	46	63
Pohang	38	15	9	14	48	49	54
Jeju	38	14	12	12	42	42	54
Suwon B'wings	38	13	11	14	53	54	50

2018 – RELEGATION GROUP – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Daegu	38	14	8	16	47	56	50
Gangwon	38	12	10	16	56	60	46
Incheon	38	10	12	16	55	69	42
Sangju	38	10	10	18	41	52	40
Seoul[1]	38	9	13	16	40	48	40
Jeonnam (R)	38	8	8	22	43	69	32

[1]Stay in top division after winning rel/prom play-off

UZBEKISTAN

Division split after 22-round regular season; teams carried forward the record of their regular-season games against teams they were to play in the championship or relegation group

2018 – CHAMPIONSHIP GROUP – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lokomotiv (C)	20	14	4	2	37	17	46
Pakhtakor	20	11	4	5	38	17	37
Navbahor	20	9	4	7	20	18	31
Bunyodkor[1]	20	8	3	9	26	26	21
Metallurg	20	5	4	11	12	28	19
Buxoro	20	3	1	16	14	41	10

[1]6pts deducted for not paying money due to a player

2018 – RELEGATION GROUP – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nasaf	20	9	7	4	24	16	34
Qizilqum	20	9	4	7	26	26	31
Kokand 1912	20	7	7	6	21	14	28
OKMK[1]	20	7	6	7	25	23	27
Sogdiana[1]	20	6	6	8	18	23	24
Neftchi F (R)	20	4	6	10	14	26	18

[1]Stay in top division after winning respective rel/prom play-offs

CONCACAF

PANAMA

2018-19 Apertura Final

Dec 1: Costa del Este 1 Tauro 2.

UNITED STATES

2018 – REGULAR: EASTERN CONFERENCE – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
NY RB (Q)	34	22	5	7	62	33	71
Atlanta (Q)	34	21	6	7	70	44	69
NY City (Q)	34	16	8	10	59	45	56
DC United (Q)	34	14	9	11	60	50	51
Columbus (Q)	34	14	9	11	43	45	51
Philad'phia (Q)	34	15	5	14	49	50	50
Montreal	34	14	4	16	47	53	46
New England	34	10	11	13	49	55	41
Toronto	34	10	6	18	59	64	36
Chicago	34	8	8	18	48	61	32
Orlando	34	8	4	22	43	74	28

2018 – REGULAR: WESTERN CONFERENCE – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Kansas City (Q)	34	18	8	8	65	40	62
Seattle (Q)	34	18	5	11	52	37	59
LA FC (Q)	34	16	9	9	68	52	57
Dallas (Q)	34	16	9	9	52	44	57
Portland (Q)	34	15	9	10	54	48	54
Salt Lake (Q)	34	14	7	13	55	58	49
LA Galaxy	34	13	9	12	66	64	48
Vancouver	34	13	8	13	54	67	47
Houston	34	10	8	16	58	58	38
Minnesota	34	11	3	20	49	71	36
Colorado	34	8	7	19	36	63	31
San Jose	34	4	9	21	49	71	21

The top 6 in both conferences qualified for the play-offs - 3rd to 6th-placed teams going into the1st round, the top 2 directly into the quarter-finals

Play-offs 1st round

Oct 31: Dallas 1 Portland Timbers 2; New York City 3 Philadelphia Union 1.
Nov 1: DC United 2 Columbus Crew 2 (aet, Columbus Crew 3-2 on pens); Los Angeles FC 2 Real Salt Lake 3.

Quarter-finals

1st legs - Nov 4; 2nd legs - Nov 8/11

Columbus Crew v New York Red Bulls
1-0, 0-3 (agg 1-3)
New York City v Atlanta United
0-1, 1-3 (agg 1-4)
Portland Timbers v Seattle Sounders 2-1, 2-3 (aet)
(agg 4-4, Portland Timbers 4-2 on pens)
Real Salt Lake v Sporting Kansas City
1-1, 2-4 (agg 3-5)

Semi-finals

1st legs - Nov 25; 2nd legs - Nov 29

Atlanta United v New York Red Bulls
3-0, 0-1 (agg 3-1)
Portland Timbers v Sporting Kansas City
0-0, 3-2 (agg 3-2)

2018 Championship Final (MLS Cup)

Dec 8: Atlanta United 2 Portland Timbers 0.

AFRICA

CONFEDERATION CUP

Final

1st leg

Nov 25

Raja Casablanca (Mor) 3 (Rahimi 47, 61, Benhalib pen 66)
AS Vita (DRC) 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 45,000. **Ref:** N'Diaye (Sen)
Raja Casablanca: Zniti - Achchakir, Banoun (Lakohal 90+2), Al Warfali, Boutayeb, Niasse, Mabidi (Douik 84), Benhalib, Hafidi, Hadraf, Rahimi (Iajour 76). *Sent off: Iajour 90+5.*
AS Vita: Lukong - Shabani, Kupa, Bangala, Ngonda, Ngoma, Tonombe, Munganga, Batezadio, Makusu (Ngoyi 24), Lukombe (Bompunga 73). *Sent off: Bangala 64.*

2nd leg

Dec 2

AS Vita 3 (Makusu 45+4, Batezadio 71, Ngoma 74)
Raja Casablanca 1 (Hafidi 21)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 75,000. **Ref:** Gomes (SAf)
Raja Casablanca 4-3 on agg
AS Vita: Lukong - Shabani, Kupa, Bompunga, Ngonda, Ngoma, Munganga, Ngoyi (Sita 83), Moloko (Lukombe 59), Makusu, Ngudikama (Batezadio 46).
Raja Casablanca: Zniti - Achchakir, Banoun, Al Warfali, Boutayeb, Niasse, Mabidi (Oulhaj 87), Benhalib, Hafidi (Douik 31), Hadraf (Bouain 78), Rahimi.

ZIMBABWE

2018 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FC Platinum (C)	34	24	6	4	52	14	78
Ngezi Platinum	34	20	5	9	50	24	65
Chicken Inn	34	15	12	7	42	26	57
Triangle Utd	34	17	5	12	43	33	56
Highlanders	34	14	9	11	34	30	51
Herentals	34	13	12	9	28	24	51
Black Rhinos	34	12	13	9	38	30	49
CAPS United	34	12	12	10	34	30	48
Harare City	34	10	18	6	28	26	48
ZPC Kariba[1]	34	12	13	9	28	26	46
Dynamos	34	10	12	12	28	37	42
Yadah	34	9	14	11	33	40	41
Bulawayo Chfs	34	9	12	13	29	35	39
Chapungu	34	9	12	13	27	34	39
Nichrut (R)	34	9	9	16	33	40	36
B'wayo City (R)	34	9	5	20	33	43	32
Mutare City (R)	34	5	8	21	24	55	23
Shab'ie Mine (R)	34	2	13	19	24	61	19

[1]3pts deducted for fielding a suspended player

KEY TO TABLES
(C) = champions
(R) = relegated
(P) = promoted
(Q) = qualified for next stage
(QF) = qualified for finals
(EL) = enter Europa League

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Divided city...the Reds and Blues of Tehran

ESTEGHLAL v PERSEPOLIS

The Tehran derby is considered to be the most important game in Asia

Despite both clubs using the city's 100,000-capacity Azadi Stadium as their home ground, the capital's derby clash has regularly been played in other Iranian cities, such is the demand to see the country's two biggest sides.

Founded in 1963, the Reds of Persepolis are Asia's most popular club and the current Iranian champions have won the league title a record 11 times.

Traditionally the team of the city's working class, Persepolis came to prominence following the dissolution of the hugely popular Shahin Tehran side by the Iran Football Federation. When a number of players from the dissolved Shahin club decided to join Persepolis, their supporters followed suit.

During the initial 25 years of Shahin's existence – they have since reformed and now play in the city's provincial league – they enjoyed a healthy rivalry with Taj Tehran, who were the team of the ruling establishment and supported by society's upper classes. However, following the Iranian Revolution of 1979, all signs of the previous monarchist regime were banned, so Taj – whose name is Persian for "crown" – changed their name to Esteghlal, which means "independence".

Although the Blues of Esteghlal have won three fewer league championships than their rivals, they have the upper hand on the continental stage, being Asian club champions in 1970 and 1991.

As someone who has led Real Madrid in *El Clasico* against Barcelona, current Iran coach Carlos Queiroz knows a thing or two about derbies and says of Tehran's big game: "Both teams have 20 million fans. It is a huge event all over the country. It is a special game.

"You have to see it and then you can understand." WS

Battle...Persepolis striker Mehdi Taremi (right) and Brazilian centre-back Robson of Esteghlal in 2017

ON BOTH SIDES

SHAHROKH BAYANI
● 1978-85, 1989-92; (coach) 2010-15
● 1985-86

GHOLAMREZA FATHABADI
● 1979-81
● 1981-86
● 1986-88

AHMAD REZA ABEDZADEH
● 1990-93
● 1994-2000

MEHDI HASHEMINASAB
● 1997-2000
● 2000-03

ALIREZA VAHEDI NIKBAKHT
● 1999-2006, 2013-14
● 2006-09

HAWAR MULLA MOHAMMED
● 2009-10
● 2011

CLASSIC ENCOUNTERS

1968 Apr 5
The first meeting between the two sides – when Esteghlal were still known as Taj – was a goalless draw.

1995 Jan 20
When Esteghlal scored two goals in the last 10 minutes – one of which was a penalty – to level the game at 2-2, Persepolis fans invaded the pitch. Fights broke out between players and spectators, and after this game no Iranian would referee the derby for the next 14 years.

2000 Dec 29
A last-minute equaliser made it 2-2 and cancelled out former Persepolis player Mehdi Hasheminasab's late goal for Esteghlal. With emotions running high, players ended up fighting on the pitch, fans destroyed 250 buses in the city and 60 people were arrested – including three players from each side.

2012 Feb 2
Having lost the last four derbies, Persepolis were trailing 2-0 and down to 10 men with eight minutes to go before sub Eamon Zayed scored a hat-trick on his debut for a 3-2 victory.

2018 Sep 27
The 89th meeting was a 0-0 draw, which meant Esteghlal still lead Persepolis 23-22 in derby games won.

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